

PLAY AND RECREATION

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CURTIS

Pinckneyville, MO

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PLAY AND RECREATION FOR THE OPEN COUNTRY

BY

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RECREATION AND OTHER SOCIAL SUBJECTS

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TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER
WHOSE SYMPATHETIC INSIGHT ON A
MICHIGAN FARM MADE POSSIBLE THE
PLAY OF MY CHILDHOOD

JUL 18 2000

PREFACE

I was led to undertake the preparation of this book by a suggestion that came to me from Dr. A. E. Winship of the *New England Journal of Education* while I was lecturing and conducting some play demonstrations at the normal school at Kearney, Nebraska. The suggestions here made have since been tried at many normal schools and rural teachers' institutes.

I am much indebted to the following associations and persons for their kindness in loaning pictures for the book: The Playground and Recreation Association of America; the Boy Scouts of America; the Camp Fire Girls; Mr. O. H. Benson of the United States Department of Agriculture; The Agricultural College, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Miss Nina B. Lamkin; Young Women's Christian Association, St. Louis, Missouri; Mr. W. Francis Hyde, Worcester, Massachusetts; Reverend Frederick Hollister, North Stonington, Connecticut; Mr. John Staples, Houston, Texas; and President John Kirk of the Normal School, Kirksville, Missouri.

H. S. C.

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INTRODUCTION

To one who has observed how the small stump patch of the pioneer has given place to the broad, smooth acres of the modern farm, how the log cabin or dugout has been replaced by the modern house, how the lumber wagon has been succeeded by the carriage or automobile, it appears that rural communities have made tremendous progress. The industrial development of America has been one of the wonders of the world ; but it cannot always be taken for granted that a larger farm will mean a larger life, that more wealth will mean more leisure, or that a better house will also mean a better home. We may well inquire if almost the opposite effect has not taken place in each case.

In the days of the pioneer, while the members of the country community were much scattered in area, they were drawn closely together in spirit. Their common perils and hardships, the loneliness of the woods and mountains, made of them a brotherhood of the wilderness. They watched with their sick, buried their dead, cared for the widowed and fatherless, and avenged sternly and remorselessly upon the prowling savages the outrages committed. If a house or a barn was to be raised, the community turned out to help. If a wood was to be cleared, the neighbors assisted with the logrolling ; and there were husking bees for the youths and maidens, and quiltings for the women. The life and times made of the rural community a large family, in which there was much coöperation, and where every one took an interest in every

one else. The houses were scattered, but the families were large and the social occasions of a primitive sort frequent. The days and times were full of hope. The young man did not look forward to being a hired man, but to being the proprietor of a farm. The girl looked forward to an early marriage and the responsible position of a matron. The primitive schoolhouse was a social center, where were held in the evenings the spelling matches, the debates, and the singing school. Such a life could not be tame or dull. It offered an almost ideal appeal to the spirit of youth.

These conditions have passed so silently that we have scarcely been aware of the change ; the country still is living under the shadow of the pioneer and his method of thought. In the early days there was plenty of hunting and fishing, and there was an occasional scalping party, conducted by the Indians, which gave variety to life and prevented it from being dull. Such conditions brought out the manhood in boys and awoke the heroic in girls. There was not the time or energy or often the opportunity for vice. Men and women living under such conditions did not see the need of play. Life itself was a desperate game of engrossing interest. The farmer has been too busy improving his farm to take thought of social conditions or to notice the change. In his haste to be rich, he has forgotten to live. He has not learned to love nature or his work. He and his wife are working too long hours themselves, and working their sons and daughters much too long. Following a plow or a drag over a cultivated field is not as interesting as felling the trees in the forest and burning the clearing. Much farm machinery has been introduced and the work and hardships have become less. Perhaps the farm is not less interesting to the adult farmer who is trained to handle machinery and to understand the problems with which he has to deal, but country life is

vastly less interesting to children and young people, because its danger and romance are gone. The nature appeal of great forests, and wild animals and a wild life is gone. The adventure and romance and exploration are gone. The opportunities of taking up new land and becoming a proprietor have largely gone. The coöperation and sociability of the pioneer have been replaced by the independence that has come with safety and labor-saving devices. The rural school is no more a social center. The results of these conditions are upon us. Forty-three per cent of American farms are now held by tenants. It is very difficult if not impossible to get either a hired girl or a hired man in most sections. The more capable members of the population are drifting toward the city, and there is a vague but general unrest and dissatisfaction among the younger generation, which is the outward expression of this hunger for a larger life.

The country must take seriously this problem of readjustment. It must provide some substitute for the adventure and romance and sociability that have disappeared. It must break the isolation and spirit of self-sufficiency of the modern farm that has replaced the interdependence and sociability of the pioneer. It must restore to the country school at least as much of social value as it had in the old days of spelling matches and debates. It must appropriate for itself the message of the modern gospel of play. This should not come to the country as something wholly new, but rather as a restoration and a readjustment. It is essentially an effort to give back to life those fundamental social values of which changing conditions have deprived it.

Rural life has become overserious and oversordid. It must perceive that life and love and happiness, not wealth, are the objects of living. There must be injected into it the spirit of play. The isolation of the farm home must be broken by

establishing some place where farm people will frequently meet together, and the colder and freer months must be more largely utilized for education, recreation, and the public good. The hours of work must be reduced, and the half holiday must be brought in. The country must discover again in its daily life the adventure and romance and beauty that have passed.

All too often in these years of earnest struggle for success, the children have been only a by-product of the farm. The farmer has loved and cared for them, but the rearing and training of a worthy family has not been one of his objects in life. He has cared for his corn and potatoes, but his children have "just growed." Play he has often confounded either with idleness or exercise, deeming it only a useless waste of energy, better devoted to pulling weeds or washing dishes. Yet playfulness is almost synonymous with childhood; it is the deepest expression of the child soul, and nature's instrument for fashioning him to the human plan. Play is needed by the country child no less than by the city child; but, with decreasing families and enlarging farms, it is becoming increasingly difficult. The equipment that is necessary must be introduced into the home and the yard. Play must be organized at the country school, as it is coming to be at the city school. The social center, the Boy Scouts, and the Camp Fire Girls must bring back the adventure and romance that the country has lost. The rural school must train the child to perceive and love the beauty of the open country, to hear the thousand voices in which Nature speaks to her true worshipers.

These are obviously no slight problems. If this small volume may in any way make it easier for those who have to work it out in practice in the farm home, the rural school, and the open country, the author will be well satisfied.

PART ONE

PLAY IN THE HOME AND ITS ENVIRONS

PLAY IN THE HOME AND ITS ENVIRONS

The hope and glory of this country have always been its farm homes. Here have been nourished most of our great men. Here have been bred the sturdy self-reliance and independence that is not easily led astray by mobs or demagogues, that does not follow each will-o'-the-wisp that flaunts across the times. In the farm family there is an intimacy of knowledge and experience that is not in other families, for all are partners in a common undertaking. The farm offers to the children an out-door life, and helpful tasks, and dogs and pigs and sheep and horses for friends, and work to do, and the forest and stream with all their wild inhabitants to stir old racial memories. If to this is added sympathy and an appreciation of those subtler values of the spirit which money cannot buy and the purse may not contain, and if the necessary chores and occasional work are not allowed to become child labor, then the farm is the ideal place to rear children.

The besetting sin of the American farmer has always been his materialism. In his pursuit of a living he has forgotten to live. Hunting and fishing, which have furnished most of the adventure and sport to the farm, have well-nigh gone. With each decade the farms have become larger and the children fewer. Race suicide in the country is a double tragedy, because the only child in the country home has no one to play with and grows up a little old man or woman. The children have furnished most of the idealism and poetry to country life. Their play has relieved its monotony. Their future has furnished motive and aspiration to what otherwise

would have been drudgery. But the farm woman must have more time to organize the social life of her family and the community. The farmer must see in the play of his children the spirit of childhood, that may never be sacrificed to farm profits.

The Country Life Commission has given us a new vision, which all must be made to see; the primary question for the country to solve is not the question of profitable agriculture, but the question of a life that is worth while. If this and the rearing of a worthy family rather than acres may become the ambition of the American farmer, then the country community may well be the ideal for all society to follow.

CHAPTER I

PLAY IN THE HOME

It has been said that the child learns more in the first six years of his life than he does in all the years that come afterwards. During these first years play constitutes his curriculum, the house or yard his schoolroom, and the mother his principal teacher. The home must furnish the place, the materials, and the companionship for this play, else these years will largely lack the training that they should have.

The home is disappearing from the city, because there has been little to draw the family together and much to force the members apart. The business of most city men is absolutely apart from their families. The various forms of evening recreation disrupt the family at night, so that the members very likely have few topics of conversation in common. On the other hand, the country family work and live together; the father, mother, and children all understand what is going on and take a common interest in what is undertaken. Their social life, at its best, is nearly the ideal life of the family. But in general this is only possible when the evening finds the members still unexhausted. Families should regard this evening of sociability as one of the most important parts of the day, no more to be eliminated by early retiring and early rising and the lassitude of exhaustion than the working day.

The Mother the Organizer of the Social Life of the Home. The mother must be the organizer of the family social center in most cases. It is her highest duty as home maker. It must not be neglected even if the dishes are unwiped and the

floor unswept. It seems like a sad criticism on our social life that it is not generally so regarded. If we hire a young woman to have charge of a social center in the city, she takes it as a matter of course that she must have some plan for what is to be done each evening so that every one may have a good time. It would seem that the duty was far more pressing for the mother. If she succeeds in organizing the sociability and sympathy of her home circle, she will make her house into a home where every one will be at ease, where all the fair virtues of a noble life and the charms of personal relations will develop. The boys and girls will not care to go out evenings, and they will be kept away from countless temptations. Surely, to produce such a home must be the highest ambition of every worthy wife and mother. Yet in how many homes is there any conscious attempt to make the home life attractive? Does this mean that the twenty-five or thirty dollars a month that is paid to the girl at the social center is a greater inducement to her than the thought of having a happy, contented, and virtuous family is to the farm mother? Undoubtedly this is not so. There are two serious difficulties. The farm wife has so much work to do that she has no time or energy left, and it does not seem to have occurred to her that this is her duty. She has not had the sort of training that would make her skillful in doing it.

In saying that the mother should have some plan for the evenings, I do not mean, of course, that she is to post on a blackboard a program for the evening any more than she will post the menu of the evening meal; but nevertheless she has to determine what she will have for supper, and why should she not take some thought as to how the family is to spend the evening? If there is not something attractive to do, the family will surely not care to spend its evenings at home; and if what the home has to offer is really attractive,

the family will not care to spend its evenings elsewhere. This plan should, so far as possible, provide for a period of general sociability each evening — the sharing of the experiences of the day that is necessary for mutual understanding and sympathy. Very likely there should be a period in which some one should read aloud from some book or magazine, and very likely there should be some singing or music and the playing of games. Perhaps the neighbors or their children should be invited in, or the family should go out to visit or to hear a lecture or attend a play. There must be great variation from day to day, but each evening should be worth while. This will not always be easy of course, but there are few things that are worth while that are always easy. The father should bring home his bit of news and share in the games and the sociability. The home life has gone pretty well in many cases without any plan at all, and it is only reasonable to think that a definite effort to improve conditions would have some effect even if the performers were not very skillful.

THE VALUE OF PLAY

Although play is the one activity in life in which the whole child takes part, parents who have not thought much about it often confuse it with idleness and regard it as far less important for the child's welfare than the tasks and duties that they assign. But nature is far wiser than parents and pursues her wonted way quite oblivious of their opinions, and in her secret heart she has determined that the child shall live in a world of play and make-believe, and through its occupations and experiences shall be mainly fitted for the experiences that come afterward. We are apt to speak of childhood as a period of preparation, but when we come to weigh the gains of life after its struggles and victories are over, I doubt whether we shall find anything in business or scholarship or politics that

has weighed heavier in the scale, that has meant more to the spirit, than the joyous self-forgetful play with brothers and sisters in our childhood's home. Every period of life is preparatory to the period that comes afterward, but each portion of life is also an end in itself, and to regard it as preparatory is to degrade it. "Write it upon thy heart, 'To-day is the best day in all the year.'" If we were to measure these experiences in terms of preparation, however, I believe that the showing would be equally good, for we should find that this play had largely determined our habits, cultivated our emotions, and furnished the motives for subsequent action. Consciously or unconsciously the guiding hand of the mother is upon this play. She must furnish the toys and equipment, she must allow the time that is necessary, she must not seek to persuade the child that it is not worth while, else she will dwarf or pervert these impulses which nature has given to the child for training in the most fundamental things.

FIRESIDE CHEER

Some of the most beautiful pictures in art and poetry are pictures of the home circle gathered around the open fire at night. These pictures appeal to us because they call up similar memories from our own past. The passing of the open fireplace may have been an economic gain, but it has been a great social loss. Fire has meant much to man in his struggles with wild beasts and nature and in furnishing him warmth and food. It speaks to his emotions and imagination as few other things can. Whether the circle sits in silent reverie before the crackling logs, or engages in conversation of the work of the day and the plans of the morrow, the fire is an element in the picture and the impression; it draws its circle together and makes it a unity. I am not aware whether the word "sparkling" came from the young people's sitting before the fire

together or not, but certainly there is no more wholesome or propitious place, for the open fire is the best and most silent of confederates. The fire creates the family "circle" and promotes a deeper understanding and sympathy among the members. If it is possible, for the sake of family life there should be some place where an open fire can be kindled on winter evenings. It should be the family council fire and the center of sociability and play. We have a beautiful picture of what it might mean to the rural home in Whittier's "Snow Bound." Such activities as will bring the family together frequently around the fireside should be consciously planned for. There should be story-telling, the popping of corn, the cracking of nuts, the roasting of chestnuts, etc.

MUSIC

Music is at the same time art and recreation and sociability. It is obviously much needed in the country. The Greeks made music a part of the training of every boy, because they believed that it harmonizes the soul. Music draws people together—unites them in thought and feeling. It is one of the easy ways of becoming acquainted when a group can sing together, and it is also one of the easy ways of forgetting differences, if such exist. Music at its best seems to be a common medium in which spirits blend. If a family can sing together occasionally it will do much to maintain the family harmony, and it will also provide a valuable training. It helps to throw off the care of the day and to rest from monotonous work. It should be a part of the family policy that at least one member of the family should have some training in instrumental music, and that all should sing. The instrumental training, however, is no longer entirely necessary, because there are now so many and such good mechanical piano players, victrolas and phonographs,

etc. that fairly good music can be secured from this source. Music makes a definite contribution to the home, to individual training, and to the social life of the community ; for all of these reasons it should not be neglected.

READING AND STORY-TELLING

By the time children are a little over a year old, they delight to hear stories told. Story-telling is a delightful form of recreation, which is much practiced by all primitive peoples. It is the immediate predecessor of the book in the development of literature. The Iliad of Homer and several other great racial epics have been handed down for centuries before the invention of writing by special story-tellers. It is the natural way to interest children in literature. If there is some one in the family that will tell stories in the evening, it adds greatly to the family life. Reading, on the other hand, often detracts from the life of the family by creating different interests, by preventing conversation, and by withdrawing the readers from the family circle. However, reading aloud does not have this effect. It brings the group together and gives them common interests. It should be encouraged in each family. It is well if the news and a few good stories can be read in this way each week. This allows comment and explanation, and makes it easy for the parents to discover the real interests of their children. It shows their attitude toward various situations, and gives an opportunity for helpful suggestion.

Children that are read to and told stories at home, and given books to play with, will often learn to read without any one's realizing how or when they learned. Picture books for little children are so common and so cheap now that there is no excuse for withholding them. The child who has not been read to or told stories from books when small comes

to school without having any motive for learning to read, while the child who has learned the delight that may come from this source naturally covets the power to explore and taste for himself. The prescribed work of any course of study will not produce general culture. It does not give breadth of view, and unless the information is kept alive by further reading, it is soon lost. If children have formed a habit of reading at home, they will learn nearly or quite as much from this reading as they will from their studies. Small children always love fairy tales, or folk tales as they are better called. These are, for the most part, old racial stories which have been handed down by oral tradition for hundreds or even thousands of years. They represent a primitive view of the world and things which is essentially the child's view. His nature responds to them, because they represent the world as he sees it. We need not fear that they will lead to untruthfulness or misinformation. The child outgrows the fairy tale and its point of view as naturally as he does his five-year-old clothes. The boys crave and should have books of adventure. There should be at least one good child's magazine, like the *Youth's Companion* or *St. Nicholas*, that can be looked forward to each week or month and read and pondered. If possible there should be some well-lighted room where those who wish to read can be by themselves, undisturbed by the family conversation.

Toys

Toys are used largely as educational material in some foreign countries, but most toys that are on sale in an American toy-store mean mere diversion or dissipation of mind. The endless mechanical toys that run a few times and then smash up do not serve any considerable purpose. The baby needs a rattle and soon afterward a ball, but very many children are given too many toys. It is much better for them

to have a few simple toys than a number of complex ones. The simple toy which can be played with a long time is the most serviceable ; but I suspect that there are only two types of toys that really have much value for children, and they are building and dramatizing material, such as blocks and a doll. Children like large blocks much better than the small ones that are ordinarily furnished them. If any one will take an ordinary two-by-four and saw it into blocks about the size of bricks in a mortise box, the children will greatly prefer these to the blocks that we purchase at the stores. It would be well to take also a number of boards about four inches wide and saw them into strips about a foot long. Out of these a great variety of things can be built, and it will be found that the children will never use the small blocks that we ordinarily purchase for them while these larger ones are available. It is well also to have some large, square boards with gimlet holes in them in which twigs can be stuck to represent forests, or yards, etc. Toys are valuable pretty much in proportion as they lend themselves to dramatization and enable the child to act out the stories he hears and reads. For this purpose it is well to have some figures of both animals and men, so that the small dramatist may be able to represent life.

Parents, if they can afford it, usually purchase an elaborate wax doll for their children, but all the studies that have been made of the feeling of children for dolls show that they love the rag doll more than they do the wax doll. The wax doll is a doll and remains so, but the rag doll may be anything — a child, a soldier, a giant, anything that is needed. For exactly this reason the wax doll is not as educative to the child as the rag doll. Probably the toys of the rich are not as valuable to the children in general as the simpler toys of middle-class children. Dramatic play is the method that

nature has adopted to make nature and life real to children. The parents should give this play all encouragement, and often help them in their new attempts.

A PLAY ROOM FOR THE CHILDREN

Wherever it is possible there should be some room in the house that is recognized as the children's room. Here they should be pretty free to play the things that they want to and have things much as they wish. If it is only an attic that they can paper and decorate, it is worth while. Such a room gives so much more freedom to the play. It helps to develop independence and originality in what is done, if it can be done away from adult observation. This is the place for the children's library, for their collections and curios, for their post cards and other things that they prize, and also, of course, the place for their toys and games.

PLAYING GAMES

Most of the games for the home are so inexpensive that the poorest parents can well afford them. Dominoes, checkers, and authors are standard games that are played nearly everywhere. Other games may be furnished as the children tire of these, but they should not be given more than one new game at a time. A child will learn to calculate from dominoes as easily as from the arithmetic, and it will be much more interesting to him. The child who has become familiar with the great literary men and their works from the game of authors will want to read these works also. Only recently I searched several bookstores to find "The Tent on the Beach" by Whittier. I did not know anything about it, but I remembered that it was one of the works by Whittier in the game of authors that I played as a small boy. I have always welcomed one of these books as an old acquaintance. Parents should play with their

children for their own and their children's sakes, for there is no other way that one can keep in intimate and sympathetic touch with a child. When Froebel invented the kindergarten he did not intend that there should be a separate set of teachers to play these games with the little children. They were designed for the mothers. The common play not only establishes a sympathetic relationship, but the recreation is needed by the parents as much as it is by the children. I have read in questionnaire returns thousands of accounts of cases of fear that have made the lives of little children wretched. Most of these fears were entirely groundless and would have disappeared if the children had told them. They were fears of lions in Massachusetts, of Jesse James and his gang, of the bogie man, and hundreds of other similar things, having no relation to actual dangers. At puberty comes in a whole new line of fears and temptations. Unless the parents are on the most familiar terms with their children, these fears and temptations are never told, and often make the years of youth barren and despondent. It is through play that this intimacy is most easily established.

VISITING

It is one of the sad features of the new social order in the country that people do not visit as much as formerly. The visit to a distant grandmother was always one of the greatest events of the year for me, and the coming of cousins from another part of the state was also an event to be remembered. Even to stay all night with a boy who attended the same school was something to give color to a whole week — not much less an event than a trip to Europe would be now. Parents often fail to appreciate their children's point of view and hence do not see these things in their real importance to children. The family cannot always be satisfied with the society of its own members. It needs the touch of

outside life as well. The mother should plan for visits and have neighboring children come in to spend the evening or the night occasionally. A skillful woman may thus make her home the center of a most attractive social life for the immediate neighborhood. A social life too that is safe and over which she may have immediate supervision. If she does not wish her girls and boys to go out evenings, here is her answer to the lure of outside attractions.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a sort of concentration of the spirit of home, a quintessence of kindness and love. It gives us the ideal of what the home spirit should be. It is this sort of a social relationship and attitude that the home should seek to cultivate and maintain all the year, and largely by the same means of teaching each to render service to the others. Christmas is one of the great educators and softeners of the human heart. The social atmosphere would be a little colder all through the year, if it were not for its warmth. It should be made as much of an event as possible, with the tree and lights and mystery and everything else that can make it appeal to the imagination; for is it not the one day of the year when fairyland touches our land of the humdrum and the commonplace, and the people come across, loaded with presents and good will?

As a quickener of the imagination, Santa Claus is doing a great work. At no very distant time all unknown lands and even the surrounding forest and darkness were peopled with gnomes and fairies. But science has moved down the centuries, a perfect Juggernaut for all these beautiful and mysterious creatures that once inhabited the brooks and the forests and the air. It has made life hard and cold and unemotional, not at all the sort of a world the children need. Santa Claus is the last of all these beautiful and benign creatures, and it will

be a sad day for childhood if the time should come when he too shall disappear, to leave behind a dead material world of natural laws. One needs only to see the little skeptic struggling with his doubts to realize how much he means to the child heart. We need not fear that the falling creed will leave a scar. The race and the individual naturally outgrow and cast aside belief after belief in order that they may take on other and larger faiths, more true to their developed state. If the disillusionment comes too early, it means struggle and bitterness, but if the belief merely falls away like the ripened leaf or the tadpole's tail after it has served its purpose, it leaves no scar and causes scarcely a pang. A developed imagination is one of the most distinctive characteristics of a superior person.

CHAPTER II

PLAY IN THE DOORYARD OF THE FARM HOME

The first playground of the children is the house itself. During the years from two to five or six most of their play is in the yard. For the years that come after, larger grounds are mostly demanded, but still the yard is bound to be the center of the family sociability, and much of its play during the warmer months of the year. It should be suitable for such a use.

BEAUTIFYING THE DOORYARD

In the city land is costly and the houses are huddled together. There are no fences as a rule, and nothing to distinguish one from another. The country, on the other hand, has plenty of room; there is no need of crowding, and it should be possible to make the yard a place of beauty. There are many who do not care for fences around private houses, but to me the fence seems desirable because it adds a sense of privacy to the yard and the home, and it sets it apart as a place by itself. It serves to suggest that this is not the place for the mowing machine and the hay tedder or the self-loader. It makes of the yard an institution, a separate entity around which feelings and thoughts may gather. An evergreen hedge of privet or cedar may be an ornament to the yard, or a woven wire fence that is covered with flowers may be still more beautiful. The yard should contain a few fine trees if possible, for the shade, the birds, and the romantic associations that gather around trees. There should be some flowers, if may be, and

a few flowering shrubs. Country life is all too materialistic at best, and it is most cheering to drive by a country home and find a fine bed of flowers in the yard, because it shows that beauty has not been utterly forgotten in the pursuit of gain. Flowers are very restful after a hard day's work, more so than has been generally realized. Whenever the mind can slip back from a period of conscious effort to dwell for a time on pure sensation, it is one of the most restful things that it can do; and a bed of beautiful flowers forever holds out that invitation. The flower bed is also one of the easy ways of cultivating the sense of beauty and love for natural things in children, and this is one of the tastes that must be cultivated if country life is to be as attractive as it should be.

Doubtless there are other necessary uses of the dooryard besides the play of the children, but there is no other that is more important. There must be a considerable space which is suitable for them to romp on, and there must be provision for their games.

A SAND BIN

Every dooryard where there are small children should contain a sand bin. This should be placed under a tree or in the lee of the house, where it will have shade during the hot hours. The bin should be five or six feet square, and ten or twelve inches high, with a flat, broad seat or molding board running around the top of the bin. It does not need a bottom. The best sand is the fine white sand from the sea or lake shore, but any plastering sand will do. The children should be provided with pails and large spoons with which to dig and mold the sand. They should be encouraged to lay out the road, the creek, the farm, and the neighboring village in the sand bin and there to dramatize the tales they read or hear. It is well to have a quantity of small round pebbles and let them outline their drawings with these. Children will

enjoy a sand bin from the time they are one year old until they are ten or twelve. There is no play interest that is more universal than this love of digging and molding shapes with the hand.

A SMALL SLIDE

Of all the pieces of apparatus in our city playgrounds, one of the most popular is the slide. It is also one that can be depended on to give thorough satisfaction in the dooryard.

A kindergarten slide nine feet long can be purchased of the mail-order houses for about fifteen dollars. It will be used almost constantly by the little children if there are enough of them about to make it interesting. Such a slide in one of our neighbor's yards is used constantly by a group of children, the oldest of whom is five and the youngest two. They are all able to go down head first, on their backs, and in nearly every other



A PLAYGROUND SLIDE

conceivable fashion. There has not been a child hurt. Even on the city playgrounds where there are a great many children using it, there are few accidents. Children have always loved to slide down the banisters, and nearly every conceivable incline in the cities is kept polished by them. I have often been struck by the smooth appearance of a stone coping and have not understood until I saw a child come down.

SWINGS

From the limb of a tree if possible there should be suspended a rope swing or two. Swinging is an experience that perhaps harks back to our original tree-top home. At any rate, it has a universal appeal to children, and they cannot afford to miss the experience. It is worth while to have a lawn swing in the yard also, for both the children and the adults. I have been much interested this year in watching a group of five children that have made frequent use of a lawn swing in our back yard. I am not sure but this swing should be introduced into the course of study and made a part of the prescribed work in geography. The oldest of these children was six and the youngest was a little over two; yet they all played this game, and each took all of the parts. One child would be the engineer to run the "train," and one would be the conductor to take up the tickets. The engineer would start up the train and run to Chicago or New York, the conductor collecting the tickets (leaves); then the train would be stopped and everybody would get out and gather more tickets from the nearest bush or weed. After this the train would start again with a different engineer and conductor and run to St. Louis or some local station. Even the smallest child learned the names of the places and the way the train was operated.

A TENT OR PLAYHOUSE

Every yard should contain a tent or a playhouse or both. If there can be only one, the tent is better, as that serves a great variety of uses in the country. It can be used for sleeping out of doors in the summer time, for fishing and camping trips, and for countless adventures that would not otherwise be thought of. The tent is, however, rather too light to be a first-class playhouse. A playhouse should arouse the

imagination a little ; it should be dim within, so that all cannot be plainly seen. If it could be a cave, that is the sort of a playhouse that almost any group of children would prefer. The playhouse should not be too much like a real house. It is quite as well if the children make it themselves. A fence corner that is boarded up and roofed over, or a very primitive affair that can be made of rough boards, is quite as good as one that is built by a carpenter out of rosewood. If the house can be made in a tree, that is the best of all, especially if it gives an outlook as well. It takes only a short time and very little ingenuity to make such a house if a suitable tree is available. If the house is only a platform with a railing around it, it will serve.

CROQUET

The yard of every farmhouse should provide a croquet court and set. Croquet is probably the commonest outdoor game in the country. It is in every way well suited to country conditions. It requires only two players. It is a good social game, not over strenuous, and adapted alike to the old and the young. An eight-mallet set can be had for a dollar, or as much more as you wish to pay.

QUOITS

Somewhere in the back of the yard, so as not to make it unsightly, there should be a place for quoits. The orthodox way, of course, is to use horseshoes and to cut the stake from the woodpile.

TENNIS

If there are young people in the family, or the farmer and his wife themselves are young, there should be provision for tennis. Tennis is an excellent game for the country, because it requires only two players, and because it is a game which

both the boys and the girls can play. I suppose it would cause some astonishment to see the farmer and his wife out playing tennis after supper or on a Saturday afternoon, but I know few things that would be more wholesome or salutary. The country has room for tennis which the city has not. If a dirt court is to be constructed, the farmer has the implements with which to make it. At first blush, it would appear that the farming business is over strenuous for such a form of recreation, but it must be remembered that the farming business is becoming less and less strenuous, the farmer is becoming more and more the operator of machines which are doing the heavy work. There are considerable parts of the year when his work is not hard at all. It would be more valuable, however, for his wife and daughter than it would be for him, and if it calls over the neighbor's son to play with the daughter in the evening, this will be better than the constant riding in the single buggy. The farmer tends to become muscle bound and awkward from his work, and tennis would help him to keep supple and active. Tennis has a wide age range, as it is played with pleasure from twelve years old to sixty.

TETHER BALL AND VOLLEY BALL

Tether-ball is also an excellent game for the farm home, in that it takes only two players, and it makes the player hold his head up and put his shoulders back. Volley ball is the very best game of all, because it raises the head, puts the shoulders back, and expands the chest. It will, however, take from four to ten players to be very satisfactory and will require some of the neighbor's boys and girls to join in most cases. As both of these games are described in Chapter VI I refrain from describing them in detail here.

The cost of the equipment which I have mentioned would be very slight; with the exception of the equipment for

tennis and volley ball, a mere trifle. The sand bin and play-house can be made from odds and ends that would otherwise be wasted. There is scarcely a farm home that cannot afford to have these things.

PETS

Children are naturally fond of animals. The ownership of a dog or cat gives the child a certain importance and dignity in his own eyes, and its care is a valuable training.

I have gone over thousands of papers on the feeling of children for animals. They all show that the child regards the dog or cat as he does a person. He talks to it in the same way. He interprets its thoughts and language by the sounds that the animal makes. The dog especially gives a great opportunity for the enlargement of experience and sympathy. Its care has much the same effect upon the child as the care of a dependent human being, and it will often come next to the father or mother in affection. The dog in his play constantly lures the child to activity. He is an inexpensive and most valuable toy, that is always changing its position and occupation. His usefulness as a hunter has largely ceased. As a watchman he probably does as much harm as good. He occasionally saves the life of a child in time of danger, but he probably kills as many or more in his anger or rabies. But the real use of the dog is to the spirit of the child. There is a deep sympathy and comradeship between them, which is one of the valuable experiences of childhood. As a mere inciter to physical activity he is worth as much as a gymnasium. Not only does the dog lure the child constantly into playing games and races, but with him the child will venture into the woods and the dark where he would otherwise be afraid, and will take long walks and trips of exploration. The loyalty of the dog to his masters, little

and big, is one of the most beautiful of moral qualities. On the other hand, not much can be said for the cat. She incites to little activity, has little if any loyalty, is likely to scratch if annoyed, and is the most serious menace to all our common birds. We keep the cat to catch mice, but she probably catches more birds than mice, and the mice would be more surely caught in a trap.

CHICKENS

On the farm and in the village, but especially in the village, it is often possible to combine the care of animals with profit through raising chickens. The ordinary garbage will keep a considerable number ; in the village there is apt to be no use for this, and it accumulates or has to be buried, if things are to be kept in a sanitary condition. The chickens will not cost much outside the care. If the family will now purchase the eggs from the boy or girl at regular prices, they will secure fresh eggs at no greater price than they have been accustomed to pay, and will provide the boy or girl with an allowance at the same time. The chickens will furnish a good deal of valuable knowledge, keep the children out of mischief, and give them regular duties to perform, a new interest, and some spending money.

CHAPTER III

SOME EXPERIENCES THAT EVERY COUNTRY BOY SHOULD HAVE

In the pioneer days, life offered to the boy in the country almost exactly what his spirit craved. There was a primitive open-air life, with some romance and a good deal of adventure. There was an opportunity for scouting and exploration ; there was the Indian fighting and hunting of bear or deer ; there was the fishing and the life of the woods and the camp fire. This is the kind of a life that any vigorous boy usually craves. The Boy Scouts have sprung up like mushrooms all over the world in response to such an appeal. Much of the adventure of pioneer times has gone, but there is still an opportunity for many valuable experiences in the country, for which the city has no facilities. I believe that the boy who has not been hunting or fishing or swimming before he is twelve years old will be the poorer for it all the rest of his life. No pressure of work or school should be allowed to crowd these experiences out, for, in a large way, they are more valuable than work and more educative than the school.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Royce says that we can judge of the value of any experience by its tendency to produce maximal experiences. Certainly experiences that stand out in memory, that rise unbidden to keep us company in our moments of leisure, are more likely to influence our lives than experiences that are lived through and forgotten. To me, the memory of the old swimming hole

and its joys, of the pickerel we pursued and speared, of the suckers we sought by torchlight, of the mink and coon and muskrat that we trapped in the fall, is as plain to-day as though a quarter of a century had not passed between. Perhaps I did not learn anything of value in these pursuits, but if education means the arousing of the spirit, the really living the largest and most intense life of which we are capable, there have been few things since then that have been so intensely educative. The eagerness of the spirit which arose in response to this nature call shows that it was satisfying an inner need, a natural instinct or appetite. It was the call of the wild before the child soul had entirely forgotten its original home.

I wish that we might make a law, applying to the older communities, forbidding all adults to hunt and trap, in order that we might save these experiences for the boys. I doubt whether the boy to whom it has been denied can ever develop that fullness of emotional and spiritual life that he should have. It was through experiences like this that the human brain was first developed, and it responds to them as it does to nothing else.

The hunting instinct is largely unrewarded in many sections of the country at present, as the game has disappeared; but the boy still wants a gun, if it is only to shoot at a mark. A city boy thus equipped is usually a nuisance,—a menace to the welfare of the country,—because he fires indiscriminately upon everything alive, shooting robins, bluebirds, and other songsters with the same readiness that he would a rabbit or a squirrel. The small hunter, like all beginners, needs some training. The primitive warrior is flourishing his spear and shouting his battle cry within the boy, and the successful way to quiet him is to let him have his way, that the hunter may evolve into the agriculturist, as he has in racial history. If the boy is provided with a shotgun, he will doubtless get more game, but there is not much sense of achievement in

this, and he does not learn to shoot. A shotgun is expensive to maintain and is more likely to start fires. The kind of arm that a boy ought to have in most localities is a twenty-two target rifle with all safety appliances, such as can be purchased from a mail-order department for from three to eight dollars. If the farmer will now offer bounties for the common pests, about as much as they are worth or even much less, the boy will keep himself in ammunition, will develop marksmanship, and have a fine time doing it. It is estimated that every rat on the farm will eat a bushel of corn or wheat during the year. He will cost fifty cents or more for his keep. If the farmer can get his son to shoot the rat for ten cents, he will be making forty cents by the bargain. Every sparrow will probably eat a peck or so of grain and will also drive away the other birds that protect the farm crops by eating moths and worms. If the farmer pays his son five cents for each sparrow, he will be making a good investment. Probably every blue jay robs the nests of a dozen or more other birds. He is beautiful, but his scream is discordant, and he gets his living at the farmer's expense. The red squirrel robs the nests of many birds, drives away the large game squirrels, carries away the nuts from the very doorstep, and steals the corn from the crib. The farmer may well add him to the list at the same price. The woodchuck lives largely on the grass in the meadow, his burrow is bad for horses to break into, and the mound of earth and pebbles obstructs the mower and dulls the knives. He tracks down a great deal of grass that he does not eat. The farmer can afford to give his son fifteen or twenty cents for him, and as much or more for any hawk or owl or skunk that may develop a taste for fresh chicken. In this instance, as in gardening, while the farmer is furnishing his son sport and an allowance, he is actually saving money at the same time.

SWIMMING

Swimming is another of the standard experiences of childhood that no child can miss without being the poorer for it. Bathing may be dangerous, but courage is cultivated only in the presence of danger, and it is worth the cost. The country parent may as well take it for granted that his son is going to go in swimming, as he did himself as a boy, and look around for a safe place. It is the swimming that is forbidden, which must seek out-of-the-way places, that is most dangerous. Children should be given some instruction in rescuing a drowning person and in resuscitation, just as the Boy Scouts are now doing everywhere. Swimming has long been a part of the course of instruction in many English schools. In several of our city systems it is now being taught to all the boys in certain grades. The high schools of Boston and several of our great universities require swimming for graduation. Swimming is an accomplishment that appeals to a boy as worth while. It greatly increases the pleasure of the summer time and may be the means of saving the life of the swimmer or one of his friends. Perhaps there is no experience that is more to be feared than to have to stand helpless on the bank while a loved one drowns before one's own eyes. One could scarcely refrain from springing to the rescue, even though unable to swim.

CLIMBING TREES

The dangers that have preyed upon man through the ages have largely been conquered. Modern life furnishes few opportunities for the practice or culture of courage by the adults, but there are many opportunities for the little people, and these should not be neglected. Parents should not allow their fears to make cowards of their offspring. It is more or

less dangerous to climb trees, but tree climbing is a nature experience that is old to the race, and it has its own message in arousing the spirit. The danger involved in climbing is not grave and is one of the reasons why children should climb. A broken arm will be painful, but there will not be many, and this chance is scarcely to be considered against the sense of freedom, the spirit of exhilaration that comes from the waving boughs, the sunshine and shadow, and the nature romance of the tree tops.

A short time ago I attended a farmer's picnic. As it chanced, I sat down under a tree with a group consisting of a father, mother, and three children aged about three, five, and seven. These children were not allowed to leave the group for a moment. If the boy edged off three or four feet where he could watch the other boys, he was immediately jerked back and told: "If you don't sit right here by mamma, you will get the worst whipping you ever got in your life." It is no surprise that each of the children soon began to say, "I want to go home." Such parents ought not to be allowed to bring up children, for they will surely deprive them of most of the experiences out of which a boy may develop manliness and self-reliance, out of which a girl may learn to take care of herself.

ROBBING THE NESTS OF BUMBLEBEES

One of the most valuable experiences of my own childhood came from frequent scrimmages with bumblebees. There was always a sense of exhilaration from such a combat, because one knew that they could strike back, and there was the honey for the prize if one succeeded. It is one of the cheapest possible methods of developing courage in a boy. The consequences may be painful, but they cannot be serious. Generally we used to rob the nests with paddles, which we made out of shingles, and with which we struck the bees as they attacked

us, though we had several other methods as well. We used also to make hives for bumblebees, and usually had three or four swarms on hand to observe.

COLLECTING BIRDS' EGGS AND BUILDING BIRD HOUSES

The country boy should be taught to regard the birds and to know them. It may seem strange to suggest that this knowledge and feeling often come from making collections of birds' eggs, but I believe it was so in my own case. There is scarcely anything more attractive to a child than looking for and finding birds' nests. The seeking necessitates an observation of the birds and their habits, and the intelligent boy will generally read a good bird book at the same time. This study is apt to lead to a real knowledge and regard. If the boy makes a practice of taking only one egg from the nest, the birds will not suffer much, and even if the nest is robbed, it will only delay the process long enough for the mother bird to lay a new nest of eggs. When we consider how conscienceless we are in robbing the hens, we need not develop neurasthenia about the few eggs the children will take in making collections. One cat that seizes the mother bird upon her nest at night will do more damage than a whole community of egg-collecting children. A Parliament of Birds might well agree to contribute an egg from every nest for the love and regard that comes from the knowledge and the staying of the shotgun later. A still better way to teach the children to know and regard the birds is to have them build bird houses and feed the birds in winter. The great advantage that the country has over other sections is the constant presence of nature, but this is nothing unless farm people come to love it in its varied forms.

Likewise it needs only a little encouragement to get children to collect and press all common wild flowers, or even to

take up and raise in the back yard many of these varieties. These collections will bring an acquaintance with nature and a love for it that cannot fail to mean much for country life.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Every facility should be given to boys and girls to dramatize the lives of their seniors, the occupations they see around them, and the stories they read. I have often watched with great interest the farming operations of four boys, aged from seven to ten, who had their log house, which they had constructed, and their small farms on a wooded island in a Michigan swamp. They battened the cracks in their house with moss and pasted up such pictures as they could find. They plowed their little fields with a crooked stick in the true primitive fashion and fenced them, according to their fancy, with post or rail fences from fallen twigs. They built pens and inclosures for the domestic animals which they whittled out of sticks, and they threshed their grain (moss) with threshers made from driving nails in a cylinder of wood, which was turned with a crank. Play of this kind every country child should have. At its best it is no less educative than the school. Such play the children will develop more or less for themselves, if there is any leader among them.

The girls love to keep house, dress up, pay calls, keep school, etc.; but even their dramatic play is probably less rich than that of the boys.

THE CIRCUS

The greatest day in the year for the country boy is apt to be the day when the circus comes to town. It serves to develop the faculty of foresight and anticipation as scarcely anything else does, and it transforms the sports and amusements of the children for a month after it has gone. It has a

primitive appeal that few other things have. A boy had better miss a week of school, in most cases, than miss the circus. It is one of the real, maximal experiences that colors so much of life before and after. Perhaps the school ought to be dismissed and the children taken at the expense of the district. I believe this would be a perfectly legitimate expenditure of educational funds; but since the exclamations of the children furnish half of the pleasure to the parents, it is undoubtedly better for all to go as families.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

There is a very general feeling for the "safe and sane Fourth" all over the country. Certainly the Fourth ought to be sane, but it must not be taken for granted that safety cannot be purchased at too high a price. The things that intensify and deepen life are far more important to it than safety. The country boy cannot afford to lose the "glorious Fourth," with its sky rockets and fire crackers, from his experience unless he gets something equally appealing to take its place. It is far better that a thousand children should suffer that a million children may live a larger, deeper, more appealing life, than for life to drift on in its wonted monotony for all, without anything new or primitive enough to arouse the spirit from its accustomed lethargy. Any day that will be anticipated for months and remembered for the year is not to be lightly sacrificed on account of danger. This is not to be construed as an argument against the better Fourth, which has come in with the play festival and the parade and the general fireworks at night, but it is an appeal not to take the old Fourth away and put nothing in its place. The old Fourth even with its danger was better than nothing. I have found the new Fourth in the small country towns of parts of the West, but in general it has thus far come to the large cities only.

PART TWO

PLAY AT THE RURAL SCHOOL

PLAY AT THE RURAL SCHOOL

The play of the first years of life is naturally in and about the home ; but as the child grows older, he meets his peers and does his playing largely at the school. The rural school has been as a whole an example of monumental neglect. The building has generally been poorly constructed, poorly ventilated, and poorly furnished, the teacher untrained and underpaid ; but the most neglected thing about it has been its yard. In a hundred-mile drive in most sections one will scarcely see anything else that looks so utterly forlorn as the little patch of often uneven and nearly always unimproved and unmowed ground, on which the children are supposed to play. It is perfectly evident from the sites selected, from the amount of land purchased, and from the condition in which it has been left, that the school directors have not even considered the play of the children, or, if they have, they have put it aside as unimportant. It is vital to the country that these conditions be improved both for the sake of the children, who sadly need the play, and for the sake of the community at large, that needs it no less. The school must be the gateway for the introduction of play into the community. The school, therefore, must take thought to itself that its games and athletics are suitable for the country community. It must make the play attractive enough at school so that the children will carry the games home and introduce them into the dooryard and teach their elders to play as well. The school board must furnish enough ground and equipment to make play possible, and the County Superintendent must see that it is organized.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SCHOOL GROUND

LARGER GROUNDS

The city schools are now probably acquiring twice as much ground for playgrounds as they were ten years ago. In congested sections these often cost forty or fifty thousand dollars an acre. In the country, on the other hand, although a school playground could usually be secured for fifty or a hundred dollars an acre, and the farming sections are prosperous, there has been little improvement. I am writing this from a prosperous section of southern Michigan. Land could be purchased for less than a hundred dollars an acre for nearly every rural school in this county, yet there is not one that has an acre of ground. I pass frequently through nearly every state in the Union, and I question if one per cent of our rural schools have grounds level and large enough for baseball. In the school that I attended we always had to play in the road or surreptitiously in a neighboring field. I see country boys playing ball games of some kind in this way wherever I go. Not infrequently the school is at the edge of a wood or by the side of a gully or on the edge of a hill or swamp, so that no game requiring a good-sized level space can be played. Yet the needs of the rural school are simple. It requires, for the games that the children are accustomed to play, two or three acres of level turf and perhaps an acre more for gardening. If the school is also to furnish a baseball diamond and picnic grove to the neighborhood, as it should

do in most cases, it should have not less than five acres of ground, and the consolidated school should have at least ten.

There are evidences of a new interest, however, in many quarters. The school authorities of Virginia now require that the plans for new buildings and grounds be submitted to them before the contracts may be let. It is said that they seldom give their approval to a school ground of less than three acres.



A SCHOOL BUILDING DECORATED, IN ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

The state of Pennsylvania makes the same requirement, and the code provides that hereafter "No school building shall be built without a proper playground being provided therefor." An acre of ground and more, if possible, should be set aside for school purposes (rural schools).

The educational laws of North Dakota provide: "The School Board of any school district may take in the corporate

name thereof any real property not less than two acres, nor exceeding five acres in area chosen as a site for a school-house, as provided in this chapter (265)."

These requirements have become a part of the law during the last two years, and there are doubtless other states that have made similar provisions. It seems likely that something of the kind may soon become epidemic, as such provisions are largely copied from one state to the other. The sentiment for rural play is in the air of the agricultural colleges; it can be felt at every great educational meeting. It is one of the themes at most rural-life conferences and summer Chautauquas. Just those conditions now prevail which are likely to lead to a rapid spread of the idea.

There is a strong sentiment for the consolidation of rural schools throughout the country, and a number of states are giving state aid to such schools. Their advantages over the one-room school of half a dozen pupils are obvious, and their rapid extension seems certain; however, there are not more than two or three per cent of the country children in such schools at the present time, and it will be many years before they become general. It is also a question whether this is always desirable. Certainly the present generation of country children are going to be educated, for the most part, in one-room schools, and no far-off possibility of change should prevent the school boards from purchasing enough ground to conduct a modern school. The new ground will not cost much to improve, and it can be sold back when the school is abandoned for as much or more than it cost. If the present increase in farm values should continue, it would prove a good ten-per-cent investment of school funds. The games and equipment here considered will be almost equally suitable for the one-room school, the consolidated school, and the village school.

FENCES

It is generally best that the school yard should be fenced. The fence serves to keep out the cows ; it makes the discipline easier and the yard a place by itself — a sort of institution ; it allows the better protection of the apparatus, if there is any ; and it tends toward the creation of loyalties. So far as country school yards have been fenced in the past, they have usually been surrounded by a board fence with a cap board



A SCHOOL FENCE COVERED WITH VINES IN WINNEBAGO
COUNTY, ILLINOIS

at the top. Such a fence serves as a good grand stand from which to watch the activities of the yard. It is a serviceable fence, but it is relatively expensive and is soon destroyed by the pressure of the wind or the children against its broad surfaces. The playtime is so short at best at the country school that the children should have more active exercise than watching others play, and a grand stand is not a great advantage. A good school fence is an evergreen hedge of privet or cedar. This is cheap, tight, and if not beautiful at least

not ugly, and the green does not come off. It is a good wind-break in cold, blustery weather, and is the hardest fence in the world to climb. It will have to be reënforced at first by a low wire fence to keep the children from running over it and trampling it down. A woven-wire fence that is covered with



PLAYGROUND OF A RURAL SCHOOL IN CHERRY VALLEY, ILLINOIS

A homemade giant stride in the foreground

morning glory, moon vine, kudzu, scarlet runner, thunbergia, honeysuckle, clematis, Virginia creeper, or rambler roses will be more beautiful than any other fence and also cheaper.

TREES

Trees should be set out around the grounds, not more than three feet from the fence, so as to give a border of shade and leave the center open for play. Most trees should be from twenty-five to forty feet apart when they mature, as otherwise there will not be room for the development of the top. But

it is often wise to place between the trees of a slow-growing variety, like sugar maples, a second series of rapid-growing trees, like soft maples, basswoods, or cottonwoods. These may be cut out as the other trees develop. The maple and the basswood both develop very dense tops and furnish abundant shade. The basswood grows rapidly and is very fragrant when it blossoms in the spring, and it also attracts large numbers of bees. The walnut has a graceful top and furnishes an opportunity for a nutting festival in the fall. The hickory also gives good shade, turns to a beautiful yellow in the autumn, and bears nuts that will be appreciated by the children. The Lombardy poplar is a beautiful tree that grows tall even in the open country and throws its shade a long way. If Lombardies are planted, they should not be more than eight or ten feet apart. If the ground is three acres or more in size, it would be well to have in connection with it a small picnic grove that can be used by the community for neighborhood and social gatherings. This should be kept open and the trees well trimmed.

In the Northwest and parts of the West, where the country is subject to blizzards and heavy winds, it would be well to plant several rows of trees around two or three sides of the yard for protection against the wind and snow. School grounds should not offer places of seclusion or concealment, and shrubbery in general is to be avoided, for both moral and disciplinary reasons.

CHAPTER V

EQUIPPING THE SCHOOL GROUND

In many places it probably is not to be expected in the beginning that the school directors will purchase the equipment for the school yard out of the school funds, though this should usually be asked and may often be granted. In many districts the funds are now adequate for such purchase, and if the school officers are sympathetic and the law permits,



THE PLAY EQUIPMENT OF A RURAL SCHOOL IN
WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

there is no reason why it should not be done. However, in many cases the whole situation will rest with the teacher. If the necessary equipment is to be had, it must be she that develops the means

to secure it. She need not be discouraged on this account. It is quite as well to begin with a little and let it grow from year to year. Children will thus learn the proper use of each new piece of apparatus as it is installed and will really enjoy it more. According to the report of Superintendent Kern of Winnebago County, Illinois, forty-seven country schools in Winnebago County had school socials in 1912, the net proceeds of which were \$1638.27, or a little less

than \$35 for each school. It is not difficult to do this in many communities, and this is enough to begin with. It is believed that these socials will also be good for the school in creating loyalty on the part of the children and bringing the school and the community together. The country has too few social occasions, and almost any sort of an entertainment will be a good thing and will strengthen the hold of the teacher on the community. The experience of Winnebago County can be duplicated in many other counties in this country if the superintendent and the teachers are willing to take the initiative. If the teacher does not wish to undertake this, oft-times enough can be secured to make a beginning by taking up a collection. Or perhaps a mothers' club or a school improvement association can be interested to take the responsibility off the teacher's hands, if for any reason this should be desirable.

THE SAND BIN

At the present time there are few country schools that have any equipment in their yards. Not much is necessary and this should not be expensive, as much, if not all, of it can be made by some ingenious member of the community or by the children themselves. It would be well, however, to have in every school yard a bin of good building sand. This bin may well be about six by eight feet in size, the dimensions to vary with the number of small children. It should be made of strong boards or planks ten inches to a foot high. It does not require a bottom, but should have a molding board or seat running around the top eight or ten inches wide. It should be placed under a tree or in the lee of the building, where it will have shade in the warm weather, and should be in some quiet part of the ground so as to attract the little children away from the area where the active games of the larger children are going on. It is good to have the school

directors furnish the sand bin, but it is still better to have the children do it. The older boys should be urged to do the work as a form of social service to the little people. A couple of ingenious boys would take pride in it and would often be able to furnish the material from old lumber lying about the farm. In many sections they would also be able to dig and draw the sand. The cost of the sand bin where the children do as much of the work as possible should not exceed two dollars and may be practically nil.

SWINGS

There should be perhaps half a dozen swings. The framework should not be more than ten feet high, made of gas pipe or of cedar or Georgia pine. It should be set about three feet and a half in concrete. If a strip of tin or gas pipe is put along the top of the wooden framework, the frame will last longer. About three feet and a half of space should be allowed for each swing. Six swings may well be put up in one section. This frame should be well braced from the sides, and the supporting screw hooks should be farther apart than the width of the swing seats, in order that they may not wobble. The swing hooks and the eyebolts that go through the seat should be of hardened steel. A steel thimble should protect the rope where it goes through the eyebolt and over the swing hook. If there is no one who can splice the rope, however, it may be merely run through the swing board and up to the hook on the other side, or it may be run through the board and knots tied at the bottom. The swing should hang about sixteen inches from the ground, and the children should be encouraged to swing themselves. The framework should be placed parallel with the fence and in some retired corner of the ground where there will be little danger of the children being struck in passing by. A high

framework is not recommended, because the large boys and girls are apt to preëempt such swings to the exclusion of small ones, and the swing is dangerous in direct proportion to its height. The chief danger is not that children will fall out, but that others passing by will be struck by the edge of the swing board. If two children are standing up in a swing and swinging high, so as to give the swing great momentum, a



EQUIPMENT IN A WORCESTER PLAYGROUND

Swings parallel with the fence, as they should be

little child that is struck in the temple or side of the head will certainly be seriously hurt and may be killed. Girls should not be allowed to stand up in swings in the school yard, as the swinging makes their dresses fly up. If swings are left up at night, they are apt to attract the children of the neighborhood and they may become a nuisance. The swing frame should be painted each year.¹ While swings are always

¹ For details in the construction of swings consult *Playground Technique and Playcraft* by Arthur Leland, F. A. Bassette Co., Springfield, Massachusetts.

appreciated by children, they are not necessary in the equipment of the rural school. Swings offer a purely individualistic type of play of which the children have or may have an abundance at home. The school is the only opportunity they have for social play, and such play they greatly need. Social and competitive games are incomparably more valuable to country children than swings. In equipping the yard, if the funds are limited, the swings may well be left to the second year. It is not safe to take any chances on the swings. They must be well made by some responsible person.

THE SLIDE

The athletic slide is a piece of apparatus that is much loved by small children. Fifteen or twenty will use one almost



A HOMEMADE SLIDE AT A RURAL SCHOOL

continuously and with great unanimity. They are apt to quarrel over the swings, because they all want to use them at the same time, but there is a natural rotation in office on the

slide that prevents quarrels or hard feelings. There are very few accidents in its use, and I am of the opinion that it does not do nearly so much damage to the clothes as some imagine. The child is apt to be squirming about on his seat a good share of the time in any case, and the seat is not nearly so smooth as the slide. A sixteen-foot slide that is very satisfactory can be purchased from Marshall, Field and Company of Chicago for thirty dollars.

THE HORIZONTAL BAR

At the end of the swing frame or by itself should be a horizontal bar. The ground underneath this should be excavated and filled in with soft sand. The bar is needed for chinning contests for the athletic badge, etc. The horizontal bar is one of the most-used pieces of apparatus in every outdoor gymnasium. It gives a fine opportunity to do stunts and to show off. A horizontal bar, however, that is placed over a brick pavement or hard ground either will not be used much or is likely to result in broken arms. A gas pipe or a fork handle run through two augur holes in upright posts will do, if nothing better can be obtained. It would be well to have three bars placed about five and a half feet, six feet, and six and a half feet from the ground. The posts should be not more than five or six feet apart.

RUNNING TRACK AND JUMPING PIT

Along by the fence it would be well to lay off a hundred-yard running track about ten or twelve feet wide, unless a smooth and unfrequented country road furnishes a satisfactory substitute. All children like to run races, and it is quite as good sport for the boy or girl of ten as it is for the college athlete. I am inclined to think, in fact, that the interest in running comes to a climax about ten and declines from then on. In the city playgrounds they are now putting in regular cinder tracks for the small people. This is not necessary in the country, as a dirt track is nearly as good, if the soil is satisfactory. The track should be stripped of sod, dragged, and then rolled lightly, so as to make it springy. It may not be feasible to fix a hundred-yard running track twelve feet wide, but it is certainly easy and worth while to make a short track sixty or seventy feet long and five or six feet

wide, with a jumping pit at the end. If the running track is made, the jumping pit should be placed at the end of it. A take-off board should be set in the earth, level with the surface. The earth should be dug out for about fifteen feet and some six inches of sand or other soft material filled in. The children should purchase or make a pair of jumping standards. These will require a substantial base and two uprights marked with feet and inches, and a series of holes for each inch, through which a peg can be run for supporting a string or crossbar. Generally, children enjoy the high jump more than the broad jump. All of this work can be done by the children except, possibly, making the jumping standards, and even this is not very difficult for an ingenious boy. Work of this sort develops a natural interest which makes it the best sort of manual training. So far as it is done by the child for the school and the other children, it is a practical training in social service as well.

BASEBALL AND PLAYGROUND-BASEBALL DIAMONDS

There are few country schools that have a yard large enough for baseball, and there are also few at present that have enough older boys to play the game if there were an abundance of space. There are, however, some such schools, and the boys usually want to play if there are only five or six on a side. The village schools and new consolidated schools oftentimes have an abundance of children for three or four nines, and some of them have plenty of room also. Wherever possible the baseball diamond should be so laid out that it can be used by the older boys and young men in the evening and on Saturday afternoons. The diamond is simply a square ninety feet on a side, set on one corner. It is well to outline the bases and the diamond with a pick, as this will keep the distances fixed and the game in one place. Meal sacks filled

with sand and sewed up for bases are less productive of bruises and profanity than the stone that is gathered from the wayside. The boys will make the diamond without much urging. If a regular league ball is used, this will cost a dollar and a quarter, and a couple of bats will cost fifty cents to a dollar more.

The playground-baseball diamond is thirty-five feet on a side. It may well be outlined in the same way as the baseball diamond. The ball will cost a dollar, and four clubs may be purchased for fifty cents, as an expensive club is not required.

THE VOLLEY-BALL COURT

The volley-ball court should be twenty-five by fifty or thirty-five by seventy feet in size. It may well be outlined with a pick in the same way as the ball diamonds. Two posts, two-by-fours or young saplings, should be so set as to be eight feet above the ground, and to divide the ground into two square courts when the net is up. Near the top of each post should be a strong hook to hold the net. The ball will cost from one to five dollars, and the net will cost a dollar to two dollars more. These supplies can be obtained from A. G. Spalding and Company, 124 Nassau Street, New York, from the mail-order houses, or ordered through local dealers.

THE TETHER-BALL EQUIPMENT

A tether-ball pole is sold by the athletic supply houses, but any pole or straight sapling will do. It should be thirteen feet long and two and a half to three inches in diameter at the top. This should be set three feet in the ground, leaving ten feet above the surface. Six feet from the ground a black band should be painted on the pole or a cloth tied around it. There should be a screw eye to hold the cord, screwed in the pole four inches from the top. In this should

be tied the tether-ball cord, so that the ball will hang within two and a half feet of the ground. Around the pole a circle six feet in diameter should be broadly outlined with a pick, and a straight line twenty feet in length should be made to bisect the pole and circle. The local stores probably will not carry tether balls, and it will be necessary to order them elsewhere. They will cost from six to eight dollars a dozen, probably seventy-five cents for one. A very satisfactory tennis racket for tether ball can be obtained for a dollar and a half, or four rackets for six dollars. If the rackets are furnished by the children and the pole is cut from a neighboring wood, the tether-ball equipment will cost only seventy-five cents for the ball. It is not wise to leave out the ring, as is often done, because, as the children become excited in the game, they tend to step close to the pole and strike it with their rackets. This usually breaks the racket and makes the game expensive. If they have to stay outside the circle they cannot strike the pole so easily. A ball will not last more than a month if there is much play, and two or, better, half a dozen balls should be purchased at one time.

A CROQUET SET

It will be well to provide the girls with an eight-mallet croquet set. This will cost from seventy-five cents to one dollar and a half. The girls will set this out themselves, and will take care of it if they are made to feel that croquet balls and mallets are not intended to play hockey with, and that the set belongs to them. Hollow pegs can be secured which may be driven into the ground and left there. The wickets are inserted in these pegs whenever the set is to be used. This keeps the court marked off permanently and reduces to a minimum the work and time taken to prepare for play. This is especially helpful where the ground is hard.

THE BASKET-BALL COURT

Basket ball will require two straight posts fifteen or sixteen feet long. These had best be of cedar or Georgia pine, and should be four or six inches square, set four feet in concrete ; but any straight tree of similar dimensions will do, and the concrete may be omitted, though of course the posts will not last as long. A flat shield of matched or, at least, tight-fitting boards or of fine-meshed strong wire 4 by 6 feet in size should be nailed to the pole, so that the shield will come to the top. The long way of the shield should be vertical to the length of the pole. In the middle of this shield, so that it will be ten feet from the ground (perhaps a foot lower if the children are young), should be placed the baskets. These can be purchased from a supply house for \$2.75, or a barrel hoop will do if there is nothing better available. These posts should then be planted seventy feet apart on a piece of level land, with the shields and baskets facing each other. The court 35 feet by 70 feet should be outlined with a pick. The ball will cost five or six dollars, according to the one that is purchased.

THE COST OF THE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Very likely to most rural teachers the program thus far outlined seems ambitious, perhaps impossible of realization. It does certainly require that the teacher should have the coöperation of the children, and to some extent the sympathy of the neighborhood as well. But if she wishes the coöperation of the children, what better method can there be than to do something in which they are interested ? It must be remembered too that it is quite as important and legitimate a part of modern education for the children to learn to work for the common welfare as it is to study arithmetic or geography ; that most of the things that they will do will be the

best kind of manual training, and may properly be done in school time, if the school directors are in sympathy with the work. If a teacher will raise twenty dollars by a school social or entertainment, she may well purchase with this money the following things :

One volley ball and net	\$ 6.00
Two indoor baseballs	2.00
Four bats50
One croquet set	1.50
One sand bin	2.00
Total	<u>\$12.00</u>

This would quadruple the play facilities of many a rural school and would leave eight dollars to replenish supplies when worn out or to cover any unforeseen expense. If the cheaper volley ball is used, with a rope instead of a net, as is done in Germany, the volley-ball equipment will cost only a little over a dollar. The second year, perhaps, tether ball might be added, and so this process might be continued until the yard is equipped. A closet or cabinet, in which to store the supplies, should be provided. By this time a new spirit of coöperation in the school and a new sympathy in the neighborhood will undoubtedly have been developed. This surely should not seem a difficult or unpleasant task for any capable teacher.

There is sometimes a feeling on the part of the school authorities that the children should furnish their own baseballs, volley balls, etc.; but it must be remembered that a baseball is not for one child to play with, but for eighteen children to play with, and if a boy brings his ball to school he has it batted to pieces by the other children. From the very nature of the case all such supplies should be communal property. It is impossible to have adequate play at any school unless the school will furnish the necessary equipment.

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIZED PLAY IN THE SCHOOL YARD

Some teachers seem to feel that it is beneath their dignity to play with the children, and one often hears the old saw "Familiarity breeds contempt." Whenever I hear this quotation in this connection, I always feel like completing it by its implied condition. Familiarity reveals you as you really are. It leads to contempt if you are contemptible. If familiarity makes you contemptible to your father and mother, your brothers and sisters, it will make you contemptible to the children as well; but if, on the other hand, you wish to be a real friend to the children and have a lasting influence over them, there is no other way. The person who sits upon a platform of assumed dignity and answers our questions by "yes" or "no" and gives us sage advice about our conduct has very little influence upon us either in school or outside of it. Everywhere the testimony of the teachers who are sympathetically playing with their children is that this play solves the question of discipline. It will not make angels of street Arabs of course, but it cuts out almost altogether the vicious and willful disorder and makes the sentiment of the school the strong ally of the teacher. While Dr. Harris was Commissioner of Education he asked me to make a study of the personal influence of the teacher for his annual report. I collected about eight thousand papers from high-school students, normal-school students, and eighth-grade students on the subject of "The Teacher who influenced Me." While I never completed the study, I went over all the papers with

some care. There were not five per cent of them which referred to the classroom relationships. Apparently the teacher who had made a lasting impression was the one who had established a more intimate relationship with the pupil than that of the classroom. It was the teacher who had organized play, who had taken them on walks, who had got up picnics and clubs, etc., who had been remembered.

The country children need this organization of play. Principal Scudder of the New Paltz Normal School says in his



THE RECESS TIME

booklet on "The Field Day and Play Picnic for Country Children," "Country children do not play enough. Their repertoire of games is surprisingly small and inadequate, except where especial efforts have been made to teach them. Moreover, their games are strongly individualistic, training them for isolated effort rather than coöperation." The school is almost the only place where country children can play organized games, because it is the only place where there are enough of them together. There are some communities and schools where the children themselves develop sufficient

leadership to have much play that is worth while in certain groups, but this will never include all of the children. Perhaps for these capable children a suggestion may be all that is needed, but for other groups, probably the little children and the girls, actual leadership and organization will be required if they are to do anything that is worth much.

GAMES FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

If the teacher has had kindergarten training or is familiar with the games, she may safely play all of the more active ones with the children in the yard. They are being used in the city playgrounds everywhere. In New York City, where we once made a rule that no child over eight should come into the kindergarten section of the playground except in the case of little mothers who were caring for their little brothers or sisters, we found that the older girls would often borrow a little brother or sister in order to get in. These girls were often thirteen or fourteen years old. Some of the most popular games for children a little above the kindergarten age are Cat and Mouse ; Jacob and Rachel ; Slap Jack ; Whip Tag ; Hide and Seek ; Puss in the Corner ; The Miller ; Farmer in the Dell ; Bean Bag ; London Bridge ; The Needle's Eye ; One Old Cat. For further games for children of this age, consult "Games for the Playground, Home School, and Gymnasium," by Jessie Bancroft ; "Education by Plays and Games," by G. A. Johnson ; "Play," by Emmett D. Angell ; "Popular Folk Games," by Mari H. Hofer.

Games that are popular with children a little older, and which require no apparatus and little teaching, are Blind Man's Buff ; Drop the Handkerchief ; Duck on a Rock ; Three Deep ; Last Couple Out ; Bull in the Ring ; Fox and Geese (in the winter) ; Pom Pom Pull Away ; Prisoner's Base ; Captain Ball ; Dodge Ball ; Catch Ball ; Battle Ball.

These last four games are played with a volley ball or a basket ball, preferably with a volley ball. These are all standard games that every child should know.

THE TEACHING OF GAMES

The same principles apply to teaching games as to teaching anything else. Whatever is taught should be taught thoroughly until the children know it. A new game should not be brought in until they are thoroughly familiar with the old and have begun to tire of it. The process of learning a game is not interesting.

NEED OF NEW GAMES

The games of the little children, while important to the school, are less important in a large way to the community, because they are left behind by the growing children and will not be carried from the school into life. The school must start a set of athletic enthusiasms that will give recreation and safeguard the leisure of later years. It must seek to break the isolation and build up the social life of the country by games that call for a number of participants and that mature men and women will play with pleasure. Even a superficial observer must be aware that we have no such games at present.

We have a tradition that baseball and football are our national games. However, a moment's thought will tell any one that for the most part these games are played by schoolboys only, and that we as a people have no national game except professional baseball, in which we participate from the bleachers. We need very much a series of games in which girls and adults will take as active an interest as schoolboys do in baseball. Baseball and football cannot be considered in this connection, because our population is rapidly becoming

an urban population, and both of these games take much room. Both baseball and football are unsuited to girls and adults because they are too violent, and football is unsuited to the majority of the student body for the same reason. We need to teach our children games in the schools which will be pursued later, so that leisure may not mean dissipation. Leisure is going to be a larger part of life in the next generation than it has been in the past, and the schools must see that this does not mean that the next generation is going to be more dissipated. Liberty H. Bailey of Cornell University, Dean of the State Agricultural College of New York, says: "Better technical farming and a more carefully organized farm plan will give the farmer the time that he needs for other interests. In the future he will be able to command at least one day a week, aside from Sunday, for reading, study, vacation, and other forms of recreation." One needs only to glance at the raising of corn to see how much the farmer's time is being economized. To-day it is certainly cheaper in many localities for the farmer to have his plowing done by a steam plow than to do it himself, if he cannot afford such a plow. Corn is now largely planted with a drill; it is cultivated with a horse cultivator that tills one or two rows at a time; it is coming to be cut by a horse cutter and husked by a machine husker. The same circle of labor-saving appliances have already become nearly universal for wheat, oats, rice, and beans. The farmer to-day needs to be a mechanic, a stockman, a merchant. He must know the sort of crops to raise on his farm and where and when to sell them. He cannot keep his nose on the grindstone or his feet in the furrow all the time and hope to be successful as the man of affairs which the times demand. The great drawback to life in the country is its isolation, and the cure of its isolation is the development of its social and recreational life. The school must do its share.

There are two games that have become popular in the last few years that are well suited to the needs of the American people for recreation. They are well suited because they require but little space, because they are played by boys and girls and by men and women with equal pleasure, and because they offer the sort of exercise, the social opportunities, and the mental relaxation that are needed. These two games are volley ball and playground baseball.

VOLLEY BALL

Volley ball I believe to be the very best game we have. It is a game that is played with a sheepskin or horsehide ball a little smaller and a little lighter than a basket ball. In Germany a similar game, *faustball*, is played over a rope ; in this country volley ball is usually played over a tennis net that is stretched so that the top of the net is seven feet and a half from the ground. The indoor size of the court is 25 by 50 feet. Outdoors it is often played on a court 35 by 70 feet, or even larger. Any number of players may participate, but matched games are usually played with five or six on a side. The ball is served over the net with the palm of the hand, as one would serve in tennis. The server stands with one foot on the back line. Those on the opposing side strike the ball while it is in the air and return it in this way to the other court. If the ball that is served is not returned or is knocked out of bounds, it scores one for the server. If the opponents knock it back and the serving side does not return it, the server is out. Twenty-one points are a game according to Spalding rules, but it is sometimes played with fifteen-minute halves, as in basket ball. Volley ball is our best school game, because it takes little space for many players and is played by the girls as much as the boys. Both girls and boys will begin to play it four or five years

younger than they will basket ball and will continue to play it forty years longer. A whole class may be taken into the yard to play volley ball, as a city class might have gymnastics. The net is seven feet and a half high, and the ball is often twenty feet in the air. The player must use both hands to play skillfully, so he must keep his head and his shoulders back and his chest out. Volley ball is the best corrective that we have for the bad postures of the schoolroom



A VOLLEY-BALL GAME

and the round and stooped shoulders which often distinguish the country boy. Almost the only game that the business men are playing in the Y.M.C.A. gymnasiums is volley ball. So far as college faculties are playing any game outside of tennis, it is generally volley ball. Basket ball does not meet this need of a game that will safeguard the later years, because it is not played after school days are over. Volley ball in a small rural school may often be the only team game that there are enough of the older children to play, and it is

a game at which the girls are at no considerable disadvantage in playing with boys. It must not be thought on this account, however, that the children are going to be eager for the game at first. It is one of the laws of play that it is independent of all thoughts of advantage. Children want to participate in the games they see and hear about, and no game is very interesting until some little skill is acquired. In introducing volley ball the teacher will have to take part with the children. After a little skill is acquired there are few games that are more popular, but during the period of learning they need all the encouragement and help they can have. Volley ball is a good game with three or even with two on a side, but it is also good with fifteen or twenty on a side.

PLAYGROUND BASEBALL

Indoor, or playground, baseball is similar to regular baseball except that it is played with a large, soft ball from fourteen to seventeen inches in circumference, and the bases are thirty-five feet apart instead of ninety, as in regular baseball. The only important differences in the rules are that the ball must be pitched underhand and that the runner may not leave his base until the ball has passed the batter or been struck. The advantages of this game are much the same as the other. It is played by both boys and girls, it is not dangerous in a crowded playground, it is enjoyed by much younger children than is the standard game, and adults will continue to play it long after baseball has become too strenuous for them. It is a good thing for the girls to play with the boys, as they will thus learn the rules more rapidly and they will borrow from the boys some of the play spirit which they are so apt to lack. The criticisms of the boys will also stimulate the listless ones. The boys will probably think that playground baseball is not the real thing at first, and the girls will

regard it as a boys' game. There will not be much enthusiasm in the beginning unless the teacher plays with them. I have seen places where the children have been furnished with the equipment and told about the game, without their doing anything but throw the ball around for the whole summer until the teacher began to play, when it took only two or three days before several teams were organized and a vigorous interest was manifested. Women teachers often hesitate to play, fearing that they will appear ridiculous, but they



A GAME OF BASEBALL

need not be discouraged from thinking they may do fairly well. Among several hundred students in playground baseball at the University of Utah last summer, the best player was a woman teacher, though most of the participants were men. The boys will not expect very much of their lady teacher in baseball and will be the more surprised and respectful if they find her an expert. Playground baseball and volley ball are also much easier to umpire than baseball and basket ball, and there is less danger of unfair or rough conduct or quarreling. It does not take long to make the children enthusiastic. A matched game or two with another school

will help greatly. If a rural school contains only fifteen to thirty pupils, it is not likely that there will be eighteen boys or even ten girls or boys of baseball or basket-ball age, for in both of these games the girls will have to play separately from the boys to have much fun. Under these circumstances the advantages of having a game which the children enjoy at an early age, and where the girls and boys can play together, are apparent. Of course there is a question in the minds of many people whether the boys and girls should play together anyway. In the city the girls' yard is usually separate from the boys' yard. This separation is not feasible, however, in the country school or in the country community. The number of children in any given area is so limited that the boys and girls are practically compelled to play together if they are to play at all. I am not able to see any moral dangers arising from boys and girls playing baseball or volley ball together. It is the loafing and sequestration of boys and girls that is likely to be morally dangerous. A vigorous competition in which girls are at no considerable disadvantage is likely to create a more healthy relationship between them and to suppress some of the sentimentality of girls in the early giggling age in a way that will be advantageous.

LONG BALL OR LONG TOWN

Long ball is played with a regular indoor baseball. It differs from baseball in that there is only one base, which corresponds to second base. Whichever way the ball may go, or if it is only touched, it is a fair hit. All fouls are eliminated. The batter is out on a caught fly or the third strike or when he is hit or touched with the ball in passing to or from the long base. Any number of players may assemble on the long base and wait their chance to run in, but if all the players get on the long base at once, the side is out. The score is the same

as in baseball, and three outs retire the side. This game has the added charm over baseball of throwing at the runner. As there are no fouls, the game is very fast. As there are no set positions, all players are fielders except the pitcher and catcher, and there may be any number on each side, though of course the game will not be as vigorous with a large number as with a small number.

TETHER BALL

Tether ball is probably the best game that can be played in a limited space by two players. From its nature it is especially suited to the small rural school. A post two or three inches in diameter and thirteen feet tall is set three feet in the ground. Six feet above the ground there is a black band around the pole. Attached to the top of the pole is a tether ball (a tennis ball inside a netting sack). A line twenty feet long drawn through the pole divides the ground into courts, and a circle six feet in diameter keeps the players away from the pole. On opposite sides of the pole stand the contestants with tennis rackets. The server takes the ball in his hand and strikes it as hard as he can, seeking to wind it up around the pole above the black line. His opponent on the opposite side seeks to wind up the ball in the opposite direction. Players may not step over the dividing line or inside the circle. The ball is up in the air most of the time and tends to keep the head up and shoulders back. The player must run back and forth over the space allotted to him and often jump as high as he can in order to reach the ball. There is fully as much exercise in fifteen minutes of tether ball as there is in an hour of tennis. When some little skill is acquired, it is one of our most interesting games.

In Washington, from the time our playgrounds were opened in the morning until they were closed at night, there were

always two or three children standing in line to use the tether ball, but the children left to themselves without encouragement do not learn the game well enough to make it interesting.

CROQUET AND TENNIS

Croquet and tennis are both well adapted to the rural school and especially the consolidated rural school. They have also the great advantage that they are suited to the home as well, and playing these games at school should do much to introduce them into the community — an argument that applies also to volley ball and tether ball. When one looks at the large problems of social welfare and social needs, at the isolation of the country home, and at the frequent resulting dreariness of rural life, is there not reason for saying that it is quite as important that the children should acquire wholesome recreations in the school as that they should learn geography and grammar? If the farmer and the farmer's wife have not played enough for their own good or the good of their children or the country, what better thing can the rural school do than to instill into the children an enthusiasm for sports that will be carried into the home and the community? This is not sentiment but common sense. Few other things can do so much to keep the boys and girls on the farm.

BASKET BALL

Basket ball is not a good game for a strictly rural school, because it is not played with much interest by children under thirteen years of age. The exercise is violent and a severe strain upon the heart. The boys' rules are different from the girls' rules, so that they cannot well play together. There are not many rural schools that have ten girls or ten boys that are old enough and strong enough to play. However, in

village schools and in consolidated rural schools it is probably wise to make provision for basket ball. It has the advantage of an enthusiasm already created, and it is easy to form teams.

PLAY FOR THE GIRLS

The older girls are really the great problem in organizing recreation anywhere. The boys will play a good deal under almost any conditions, but the girls do not play anything of



BASKET BALL

much value without a good deal of encouragement. Girls are handicapped by their clothes and by all sorts of restrictive customs. The boys are constantly encouraged in their sports, but the girls are usually discouraged. The girl comes up to puberty with only three fourths the lung capacity of the boy of the same age. Whatever the school can do to make play more interesting for the girl, it should do.

THE STANDARD ATHLETIC TEST

One of the best things that has happened to athletics in this country was the establishing of the standard test by the Public School Athletic League of New York City. This test says that every boy under thirteen who can run sixty yards in eight and

three-fifths seconds, chin a bar four times, and jump five feet nine inches standing shall have the standard button of the League. The great advantage of the test is that it is non-competitive, and the winning of the button by one does not interfere with its being won by others. It sets a standard, and we all tend to live up to a standard when we know what it is. It is generally supposed that country boys are strong and that they will not need practice to perform such feats as these; nevertheless, it did not prove so in Ulster County, where the test was tried. There was scarcely a boy who was able to do the three things without practice. It is probable that the same results would be found elsewhere. Country boys in general would be able to do the chinning very likely, but not the two other stunts. In order to get up much enthusiasm for this test there must be a place for chinning, a horizontal bar if possible, and a sixty-yard running track that is marked off. A stop watch will be an advantage, and it is well to have a place five feet nine inches long laid out for the broad jump, so that they can practice when they wish. If an enthusiasm for this test can be aroused, most of the boys will come up to the requirements after practice.

INTERSCHOOL ATHLETICS

The country school is the best place in the world for athletics of the intercollegiate or interschool type. In our city schools they are always objectionable, because they lead to the development of a team of nine players with a thousand rooters on the grand stand. The players are overstimulated and overtrained and not infrequently overbruised, and their school work suffers. The cheering has not been good exercise for the student body, and the team has had more than it needed. The country school will not be subject to this criticism. If it organizes a first and second team in playground

baseball, it will probably use all of its available material, and all will get the training. The country boy and girl are made diffident and backward by their isolated life. They need the experience of going over to another school, meeting other children, and having contests with them. The country school has in general created no loyalty or school spirit. The easiest way is through a contest with another school. We have deemed that intercollegiate contests were necessary in our



THE COUNTRY ROAD AS A RACETRACK

colleges in order to maintain the interest of the student body, and probably they have been in the past. Most of the organized play of England is in the schools located in the country, and it has been within the school itself without many, if any, outside contests. But athletic enthusiasm is old in England, and athletics are required in the curriculum. It would certainly be to the advantage of the rural school to hold contests with other schools.

It is not impossible that the children should walk to these meets, but it would be better that they should be taken,

especially if they are to participate in contests. If it be feasible to transport the children of a township to a central school building every day, it should not be impossible to transport them occasionally to an athletic meet, even though one or two farmers were hired to take a hayrack load of children to the tourney. One or two such meets will be sufficient to make the enthusiasm run high and set the children to training.

TIME FOR PLAY

It may seem difficult to find time for play at the rural school; but there are available the noon intermission of an hour, as most of the children do not go home for their dinners as they do in the city, and two recesses of fifteen minutes each. It is not well to take violent exercise after a hearty meal, but the children do not bring hearty meals with them to school. They do not take more than ten or fifteen minutes to eat, and this leaves at least half an hour for good play. It will be to the advantage of the lessons to get the children out for the recesses also. But many country children will come to school at eight o'clock if there is anything interesting to do before school begins, and they will often stay for an hour after school is over. The small children are not going to study more than two or three hours a day, and they might well be allowed to go out and play as soon as they have their lessons, on condition that they will not disturb the school with their noise. This would put in the hands of the teacher an effective incentive to secure the faithful study of lessons, and would probably yield better scholastic results than the five-hour school day. At the same time it would give the children the outdoor exercise and life which they need. An hour of organized play a day, on an average, is part of the school curriculum in every grade below the fourth in New York City. There is an hour and a half of organized play a day in the

first six grades of the public schools of Gary, and many other cities are taking up the movement. The German folk school, on an average, devotes an hour a day to gymnastics and play in every grade. The preparatory school of England has about two and a half hours a day of required play. It would be no anomaly in the educational practices of the world if two or three hours a week were set aside from the school day to play games that are worth while.

WALKING TRIPS

Probably we Americans are more adverse to walking than any other people. If we have two or three blocks to go in the city, we take the streetcar, and in the country we drive. In Scotland one will often meet a good-sized party out walking in the rain, and in England whole schools often go off for long trips. The school journey is a part of the program in Germany and Switzerland. In Germany these trips often cover a hundred miles or more and take a week or more of time. Walking is the best way in the world to become familiar with the country, to learn its resources and possibilities, and to develop a love for nature. It is excellent exercise. The teacher in the rural school is greatly handicapped by the different ages of her children in attempting such ventures, and she also will have to consider the attitude of her board of directors toward it. It would be wise, if the school directors agree, to send the little children home at noon on Friday in pleasant weather, if they can go home by themselves, and take the older children to some place of interest not more than five miles away. There are such places in nearly every neighborhood, and it is surprising how few of them the children see by themselves. It may be the city hall, the public library, or museum in a neighboring town; or it may be a mountain, a river, a historic or literary landmark; or a fine herd of cattle,

a fine farm, a field of sugar beets, or some other crop that is new to the children ; or it may be a flourmill or sawmill, a lime kiln, a stone quarry, a lumber camp, or colliery. There are few neighborhoods that are without some of these objects of interest. A visit to them is quite as educational as the school studies, — it is travel and experience, — and these the country child greatly needs. If the trip be to a neighboring academy or technical school, or country high school, it may lead



A SKIING PARTY

Winter trips on skis are often taken by German children

some of the children to continue their education further. The walk will develop the social life of the school and the personal relationships with the teacher. Along the way collections of leaves and flowers may be made, and the children may be taught to observe the birds, the formation of watersheds, water channels, beautiful views, etc. Such a journey might well be made the prize of good conduct and lessons during the week. On Saturday it would be well to have an occasional picnic to which the parents also are invited, and where, besides a picnic dinner, there might be ball games and athletics.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE AS A SOCIAL CENTER

There is a great movement at present for the wider use of school buildings. This movement holds as the first article of its creed that to use public property only five hours a day for five days a week and eight or nine months a year, when it is possible to use it profitably much longer, is folly. It is known as the Recreation Center, or Social Center, Movement. Farm communities do not get together enough for social, educational, or civic purposes. There is more need for the wider use of the country schoolhouse than of any other school building. In the city there are the theaters and church socials and public lectures and entertainments. It is hard at any time to select a night when there will not be many things going on. During the late fall and winter the farmer's duties are not usually very pressing and he has plenty of time for reading and social and educational purposes. Every rural school should be first of all a center for the distribution of books to the community. The old-time school had a number of social uses that it seems to have lost. In it were held the singing school, the country debates, and the spelling match at least, and all of these were social events of importance to the community. This topic will be treated in detail in the later part of the book.

CHAPTER VII

SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS AND CORN CLUBS

These are two of the more recent school movements that are now lending a new interest to school life and country life. It is very difficult to say how general they are, but school exhibitions have been held in many of the rural schools of Iowa, Oklahoma, and North Dakota, at least, for some time. In most places the exhibitions are at the school and are of the products raised by the children who attend the school. It is difficult to give a general account of a work which as yet has no historian. I choose, rather, to give an account of it as carried on in the states of Virginia and Oklahoma.

COUNTY SCHOOL FAIRS IN VIRGINIA

So far as I know, the county school fair originated in Campbell County, Virginia, in 1908. These fairs were held in 1911 in twenty-five different counties of that state. Perhaps a better name for them would be children's fairs, for they are an attempt to exhibit the work and play of children outside as well as inside the school. These fairs are rapidly growing in attendance and popularity, and the Campbell County fair is now housed in a permanent building.

During primitive times fairs were among the most important means of education, and even to-day there are few things that are more educative than attending a well-planned exhibition along the line of one's especial interest. The World's Fair in Chicago was one of the greatest educational influences that has come to this country. Even the ordinary

county fair, mismanaged and undeveloped as it is, has much of value for children. Probably the fair idea is more applicable to them than it is to adults. They have a great natural curiosity. They are observing and remember very much better the things they see than the things they read about. I am confident that these Virginia fairs are stimulating every phase of child development in the counties where they are held.

I quote from the report of the State Superintendent of Schools for Virginia the following account of one of these fairs :

They came in large groups, often by schools, bedecked with their school colors, waving school banners, giving their school yells, and singing their school songs. It was the gala day for the county public schools, and even early in the morning the holiday spirit was in the air.

By ten o'clock, between 3000 and 4000 people had assembled at the School Fair exhibit hall. The entrance to this hall was then thrown open, and this vast throng of people surged in. Their eyes fell upon an unique exhibit — different from anything they had ever seen at any other fair. Near the entrance was a long table loaded down with loaves of bread, biscuit, cakes, pies, home-made candy, butter, jellies, pickles, canned peaches, pears, and tomatoes. On another table was the Domestic Art Exhibit — shirtwaists, aprons, handkerchiefs, and a large group of dolls tastefully dressed in the latest fashion by the school children of the primary classes. On another table was the Flower and Nature Study Exhibit — ferns, chrysanthemums, geraniums, dahlias, and collections of wild flowers. Further down the hall was the table containing the Agricultural Exhibit. On this table were piled ears of corn, ears of popcorn, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and black-eye peas. In a corner was the Manual Training Exhibit, containing book-cases, writing tables, picture frames, brooms, farm rakes, axe handles, shuck door-mats, baskets, and rabbit "gums."

Nor had the literary work of the school been neglected. A large space was occupied by this department; on a table were a number of carefully prepared compositions. They were not upon such abstract subjects as "Intellect," "Faith," "Patience," but dealt with concrete, practical themes, such as "Good Roads," "The Value of Scientific Methods of Farming," "How to Make a Country Home Comfortable

and Attractive," "The Cause and Prevention of Consumption," "The House Fly a Menace to Health." There were also numerous specimens of writing and drawing, and the walls of one side of the hall were decorated with skilfully drawn maps of the county and the State.

And remember that all the exhibits were prepared by the *School Children* of the county.

After viewing the exhibit, the large crowd gathered in the courthouse yard, and listened to two short addresses, delivered from the courthouse steps.



A SCHOOL FAIR IN WINNEBAGO COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Next, an old-fashioned spelling match was held. Each school was represented by its best spellers, and the rivalry was very keen.

After the lunch-hour came the most interesting and imposing feature of the day's program — the School Fair parade. All of the school children of the county were formed in line of march, grouped by individual schools and school districts. Each school was led by its teachers. All the pupils of the school were wearing the school colors, many were carrying pennants, and floating high above their heads was a large banner bearing the name of the individual school. Some of these names were unusual, to say the least. This immense parade of over a thousand school children, led by a local brass band, waving their banners and pennants, singing their school songs, and giving school yells, marched

through the streets of the usually quiet country town. It was the most inspiring sight that could be witnessed — this happy, buoyant army of the future men and women of a great Commonwealth!

The parade then returned to the courthouse steps, where the prizes were announced and awarded. They next marched to the athletic field (the local race-track), where the best athletes of each school contested in the 100-yard dash, the 220-yard dash, the high jump, the baseball throw, and the relay race.

Such a fair as this cannot fail to do very much to make country life more interesting to children. The fair itself will be a pleasing spectacle — one of the greatest events of the year for them. The anticipation and participation in such an event will brighten many a dreary hour. The contests with the other children, and the suggestion of things to do and make, will be very stimulating. It is sure to lead to closer observation and better-directed effort. To the children who enter the competitions there will be a vigorous motive for excellence that has been largely lacking from the ordinary school work.

The exhibitions of potted flowers will surely do something to make the homes of Virginia more beautiful, and to give the children a greater appreciation of beauty everywhere. The domestic-science exhibition will make the girls ambitious to excel in the household arts, and the exhibits of what the children have made in the way of wagons, water wheels, etc. will give many helpful suggestions to other children, and make them more resourceful in entertaining and helping both themselves and their parents. It will tend to develop the ingenuity of the entire county.

Various forms of observation are encouraged. The following seems to me one of the best ways to stimulate a love for, and an intimate knowledge of, the birds:

Record of migratory birds. Each competitor for prizes offered for "best record of migratory birds of county" must begin in February to keep a record of the migratory birds observed by him at his station,

according to the form required by the "migratory schedule" prepared by the Bureau of Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture, a copy of which will be furnished by the Department to every teacher in — county. Pupils must observe and record the birds seen from day to day until the close of the spring migration in June.

All who have made creditable observations and records should, on or before the 15th day of July, apply to the Division Superintendent for a migration schedule upon which to transfer their record. The Department, at Washington, has promised to furnish blank forms for good records, with the understanding that the records are to be sent to the School Fair, and from thence sent back to the Department for use there.

These records are put on exhibition at the fair and awarded prizes on the same basis as the other exhibits.

The spelling matches held at the fair will help to revive this once honored institution in the various country schools throughout the county.

The school parade might easily be developed into a pageant, which would be one of the greatest annual events in the county, and might be made to teach history more effectively than books, if each school were responsible for the depiction of one historic event, and a number were represented in series. If these events were of local history, it is always one of the easiest ways of creating patriotism and civic loyalty.

Perhaps along the lines of games and play there is the greatest opportunity, for such competitions might well serve to introduce into the schools all over the county the games that are most suitable for school use and for the country community as well. The countryside has had far too little play, and especially has there been too little play at the farm home; such a fair might well set all the children and ultimately the whole community to playing, as a strolling circus sets all the children to doing circus tricks. I believe that such fairs will add immensely to the educational and social value of country life for children and adults.

Perhaps it might be simpler to have a children's section of the ordinary county fair, or a children's day that is really given over to the children. In whatever way it is done, it will be worth while if it leads not merely to the attendance of the children, but to a genuine exhibition of their work. It is probable that a day given over in this way to them—to their athletics and other events—would draw a larger attendance to the fair than an exhibit of pumpkins.

Either just before or just after its county exhibition each school should hold a local exhibition of its work at the school-house. If this were held on a Friday afternoon and evening, it would make a pleasing social occasion for the adults of the community, and the praise and criticism of the neighborhood would be very stimulating to the children. Ten such local fairs were held in Barnes County, North Dakota, last year.

Country communities are isolated and country boys and girls are diffident and backward because of a lack of social experience and a limited acquaintance. Almost anything that will broaden this experience and acquaintanceship will be a good thing. The great difficulty with the school work has been that to the children it is not directly helpful, and it is not at all evident to them that most of the things that they are learning will ever be of any use. If the work is to be exhibited, it furnishes a motive for excellence that did not exist before. This will make the work more interesting. The fair itself will be more educative to children than one where the products are raised by adults; this fact also lends it a new interest and gives it the constant suggestion "Why should I not do this?"

It was estimated by the State Superintendent of Virginia in his report for 1912 that fifty counties in his state would hold county fairs in that year. The work is being taken up this year by the state of Kentucky also.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' INDUSTRIAL CLUBS

One of the most hopeful movements for the improvement of country life that has arisen during the last few years is the movement for boys' and girls' clubs. I regard these clubs as very hopeful for three reasons, all of which seem to me worthy of consideration. First, they are giving the boys and girls who take part a very valuable social opportunity. A corn club merely as a club is worth while, if its only purpose were sociability and the discussion of problems and the learning to coöperate. It is to be expected that the boys who have worked together in the corn and other clubs will be the stanch members of the grange and other farmers' organizations later; that they will make possible the type of rural coöperation which the times so insistently demand. Second, the rural school has in the past been in no way adapted to the country. It was simply a general school, as well fitted for a manufacturing or mining town or a great city as the farm. These boys' and girls' clubs are actually doing what the rural school has failed to do; they are giving the children of the farm a real education in rural life and its problems, which is not only more practical than the education of the rural school, but which is ultimately more educative as well, as it is not teaching things that will be soon forgotten, but things that will be remembered. It is planting seeds that will grow and develop in the mind all through life. The final reason that I would give for thinking these clubs very important is a corollary of the second — that they are making country life more interesting to children, and thus are preventing an undue migration to the city. The county or state that has none of these clubs should take thought of itself.

The development west of the Mississippi River has been very rapid during the last four or five years. I cannot do

better than to make these quotations from the recent bulletin of the A. and M. College of Oklahoma.

Boys' and girls' clubs, A. and M. College. The Oklahoma boys' and girls' clubs have been organized by authority of the Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture, and are conducted by the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in coöperation with the county superintendents of public instruction and teachers as a practical feature in teaching the elementary principles of agriculture and domestic science.



A POTATO-PARING CONTEST CONDUCTED IN WRIGHT COUNTY, IOWA,
BY O. H. BENSON

Judged on three points: speed, 30; skill, 30; weight of peeling, 40

During the past year the A. and M. College organized 1300 local clubs and fifty-five county clubs with a membership of 25,000 boys and girls.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction R. H. Wilson, in a letter to county superintendents, says:

I wish to invite and urge all county superintendents to coöperate with the management of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, and recommend that you take an active interest in presenting this matter to the teachers of your county and urge upon them that they take an active part in organizing the Boys' and Girls' Agricultural and Domestic Science Clubs in their schools.

The purposes of the Oklahoma boys' and girls' agricultural clubs briefly stated are as follows:

1. To acquaint the boys and girls of Oklahoma with the state system of agriculture and industrial education extending from the common schools through the district agricultural schools to the A. and M. College.
2. To vitalize the studies for children in the common schools.
3. To develop in due course a system of education in common schools suited to the children of the common people.
4. To lead men and boys to study farm problems on their own farms.
5. To lead women and girls to study home and family problems in their own homes.
6. To awaken our people to the importance, the advantages, and the possibilities of farm life.
7. To inculcate a class sentiment and a sense of independence in the minds of farm-reared children.
8. To organize in the rising generation the farm community as an independent social unit.

Membership. There are three classes of members in the Oklahoma boys' and girls' agricultural clubs.

1. Local club members.
2. County club members.
3. State club members.

All boys or girls not under nine (9) nor over eighteen (18) years of age are eligible for membership in the Oklahoma boys' and girls' agricultural clubs, and when their applications are properly approved by their local teacher or president of the school board as supervisor, they may receive individual membership certificates, secure literature, and enter various local, county, district and state contests arranged for members of these clubs.

Local clubs. A handsome charter will be issued to five or more members in any school district who wish to organize a local club when they make application on the regular blanks and adopt a constitution and code of by-laws approved by the A. and M. College. The teacher, the clerk of the school board, or some good, practical farmer should act as local manager or supervisor of the club. The supervisor should arrange for a school fair some time during the school session and provide suitable local contests and prizes under the direction of the A. and M. College.

County clubs. The club work in each county is under the supervision of the County Advisory Committee, consisting of the County Superintendent of Schools, the secretary of the Farmers' Institute, and the secretary of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Farmers' Institute. The County Superintendent in each county is expected to act as the County Manager under the direction of the Advisory Committee. If for any reason he is unable to act in this capacity, the Advisory Committee should select some other person for this work at the earliest possible date.



SECRETARY WILSON ADDRESSING CORN-CLUB CHAMPIONS, JANUARY, 1913, ON UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GROUNDS

The County Superintendent or County Manager should issue a call for the organization of a County Agricultural Club and the election of temporary officers as early as possible during the summer. The permanent organization and the annual election of officers should take place at the county seat on the last Saturday in September. In order to secure a large attendance at each of these meetings, there should be an interesting program or a contest provided in which many of the boys and girls would be interested. This may be held in connection with the county graduating exercises of the eighth grade, the Farmers' Institute, county fair, county teachers' meeting, school fair, farmers' short course, or any other public meeting where a good attendance of the boys and girls of the county could be secured. In every case the officers of the

Farmers' Institute, Woman's Auxiliary, the county fair, commercial clubs, Y.M.C.A., or other similar organizations, Boy Scouts, teachers and all leading citizens of the county should be invited to coöperate with the County Superintendent in securing a meeting of the boys and girls for organizing a County Agricultural Club. At the first meeting the County Club constitution furnished by the A. and M. College should be adopted, officers elected, the organization perfected, and plans for the



A STOCK-JUDGING CONTEST AT THE A. AND M. COLLEGE
OF OKLAHOMA

coming year arranged as far as possible. Upon the proper application of five or more local clubs through the temporary president and secretary of the County Club, approved by the County Superintendent as County Manager, a special County Charter will be issued by the A. and M. College, which will insure the coöperation and support of the club work by the A. and M. College and the State Board of Agriculture.

State club. All boys and girls of white parentage who are not under nine nor over eighteen years of age, living in counties where no County or Local Club can be organized, may apply to the A. and M. College at

Stillwater, Oklahoma, and have themselves enrolled as members of the State Club. All members of Local or County Clubs are accounted members of the State Club without further enrollment.

There are four types of contests open to these clubs, but the state and county contests seem to be most important. The county contests are of eight kinds, as follows: First, grain contest for boys fourteen to eighteen years of age, for the greatest profit from one acre of kafir, milo, or corn, produced by the contestant. Prize, a free trip to the State Fair school, short course, at Oklahoma City, all expenses paid.

Second, crop contest for boys fourteen to eighteen. For the greatest profit from an acre of cotton, broomcorn, or peanuts produced by the contestant. Free trip to the District Agricultural School, short course, all expenses paid.

Third, sewing contest for girls. Prize same as 1.

Fourth, canning contest for girls from fourteen to eighteen. For best display, consisting of twelve or more quart cans, of canned fruit and vegetables, including at least four varieties of fruit and at least four varieties of vegetables prepared by the contestant. Prize, same as 2.

Fifth, hog contest for boys.

Sixth, cooking contest for girls.

Seventh, poultry contest for boys and girls from nine to thirteen years of age.

Eighth, butter-making contest for boys from nine to thirteen years of age.

With such contests as these there will be something going on in the country community to think about and talk about. Many of the tasks of the farm and the farm home do not require much thought or mental direction, and the mind needs fresh materials to be worked over at such times if it is to grow. If it can be arranged so that the boys' and girls' clubs can meet in the same building and they can have a social hour and games after their business session, this will be a worthy addition to country social life. This is a practical method of giving an agricultural education without introducing agriculture into the rural schools. I believe there are sections in which these boys' and girls' clubs are doing quite

as much for the children as the rural schools themselves. They will also be one of the most successful means of making country life interesting and staying the migration to the cities.

These clubs are now organized in nearly every state of the union. It is estimated that there are now about three hundred thousand members in the country, and that there will probably



A LESSON IN DOMESTIC SCIENCE FOR THE PRIZE WINNERS AT THE
STATE FAIR SCHOOL, OKLAHOMA

be four or five hundred thousand next year. The suggestion of the corn club is equally as applicable to adults as to children, if the farmers themselves could only be persuaded that it is not beneath their dignity to enter into a contest of this kind. Perhaps the corn or other agricultural club might prove quite as effective as the demonstration farm or the farmers' institute as a method of teaching agriculture, and it would have the added advantage of its social opportunity.

PART THREE

RECREATION IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

RECREATION IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

The two previous sections have dealt with play in the home and the school, and have had primarily to do with young children. This section is concerned with the recreation of adolescents and adults. It aims to show what kinds of recreation are being organized in the open country and are suited to the open country, what the essential problems of rural recreation are and how these are bound up with various industrial conditions and methods.

It seems to the writer that the following problems lie at the foundation of the whole matter, and that no satisfactory solution of the country's need can be had without disposing of them. Country people are working much too long hours during a part of the year at least; they cannot play unless there is some time to play. Long hours and lack of scientific training is making drudgery of activities that might be done in a play spirit if the hours were shorter and a deeper interest in the processes concerned had been created. Life is over-serious and materialistic in the country; it must come to appreciate spiritual ideals and the value of play. Life is dull and unattractive to the boys and girls; there must be infused into it the spirit of adventure and romance. As the farm people cannot be sociable in their daily lives, there must be some center where they can get together, both in summer and in winter, but especially in winter, as that is the time when the farmer has most leisure. The great weakness in the whole situation is lack of leadership, and this the country must provide at public expense.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PLAY FESTIVAL AND PAGEANT IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

All down the ages echoes the footfall of the pursuer, and man has been fleeing for his life, from the dinosaurs and monsters of the primeval world, from savage beasts and still more savage man with club and stone and arrow, and always from cold and pestilence and famine. These have made man their prey. He has not dared to pause in his flight to look about him ; his course in life has been determined by the bitterest necessity. Even to-day there is little freedom of choice for the peasant peoples of Europe. For the first time in the history of the world, there has been given to a great people here in America the possibility of living a satisfying life. But we are trading the gold for the tinsel, we are throwing away the pearl for the shell in which it was imbedded, " For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and shall forfeit his life ? " This is the question that should be written on the plow handles and carved on the doorposts of the American farm. What is the advantage of increasing prosperity if more acres are to mean longer hours and less time for the family and enjoyment ? The farm is constantly losing its most capable young people, because the conception of life that lies behind it is forever opposed and uncongenial to the spirit of youth ; for to that spirit, life is ever the paramount thing. But the farmer has put prosperity above living, and to this ambition, as to Moloch, he is sacrificing not his own life alone but the lives of the entire family.

Growing out of the Rural Life Commission appointed by President Roosevelt has come the "Country Life Movement," and this movement has seen its vision. The question of the open country is not one of better agriculture alone, but of better living quite as much. The farmer must be made to realize that there are other things of value than land and hogs. He must aspire as well to social and political position and influence, to founding a family and a life that is satisfying to all its members. He must enjoy the beauty and feel



A RURAL PLAY FESTIVAL

that he is a co-worker with God in the wonderful processes of growth and development. Life in the country has been too dull and hard and sordid. In some way there must be infused into it variety, sociability, and an appreciation of spiritual values.

One of the most effective means of injecting this new life into the country is the play festival. The play festival is not a new thing historically, as the Roman Church has had its pageants and fiestas for centuries. The peasant peoples of Europe have had their harvest and other festivals, coming several times a year, when nearly the whole community

assembled on the village green for a general merrymaking; but there has been a headlong haste to get somewhere in America that has not left us time to consider where we were going, much less to admire the flowers that grew by the roadside. We have so mixed the peasant peoples of Europe that they have not been able to transplant their customs and festivals. We have denationalized religion and subordinated the church, so that it could not organize the social and recreational



POTATO RACE AT A RURAL PLAY FESTIVAL

life, and we have produced from these conditions a life on the whole overserious and rather sordid, which has relegated to a very subordinate place the natural pursuit of human and spiritual ends.

It can almost be taken for granted of any new educational or social movement that it was "made in Germany," and the play festival is no exception. It is encouraging to note that it has not been a spontaneous expression of the spirit of the people, but a matter of promotion. They sought to get their people out of the beer gardens to take part in various health-giving

exercises and to enjoy life in the open. The beginnings were more than twenty years ago, and these festivals have now become common throughout the empire. Some of them, as the one of the Rhine Lands and Westphalia, include a whole province or more, and many thousands of people come by train to see and take part. The festival lasts for an afternoon and an evening, with games, gymnastic drills,



AN EXCITING MOMENT

Field day at New Platz, New York

athletic contests, music, and dancing; but its influence lasts for the entire year, for it tends to introduce these events into the schools and into the homes, and its spirit into the life of the people.

The first rural play festival in this country was organized by Principal Scudder of the New Paltz Normal School in 1905. The students went out from the normal school and taught the children at the country schools to play the games and to

take part in the contests. They found that the children did not have basket balls and could not purchase them, so they made basket balls by wrapping pumpkins in hay and sewing them up in a canvas cover. There were no baskets, so they used barrel hoops instead. They started volley ball and tether ball. They had match contests in prisoner's base and pullaway, and there were potato races, relay races, dashes, and jumps. It was decided to start the test of the Public School Athletic League, which says that "boys under thirteen shall be able to run sixty yards in eight and three-fifths seconds, to chin a bar four times, and jump five feet nine inches standing." The country people said that may be all right for city boys, who do not have anything to do ; but country boys are strong from farm work and they can do these things easily. Much to their surprise, scarcely one was successful, and the boys began to train all over the county. About the middle of June a great play festival was held at New Paltz which was attended by more than four thousand people. It has been one of the annual events in this county ever since.

THE WORK OF THE COUNTY Y.M.C.A.

Within the last decade has come the development of the county work of the Y.M.C.A. This work is without equipment and with only one paid worker, who is both physical director and general secretary. He organizes groups of young fellows, usually under eighteen years of age, at various centers about the county. They have Bible study, corn clubs, athletics, a summer camp, and an annual conference. There are now sixty of these rural secretaries. In every case they are organizing athletics over some part of the county of which they have charge, often at the district schools. They generally hold a play festival, in connection with the county fair, where it is usually one of the most attractive features. The

Secretary of Windsor County, Vermont, has attracted much attention in the country at large by the organization of this work in his county.

THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

It is impossible to say at present how many counties are already conducting organized athletics, with a play festival at or about the close of the school year. It is certainly a far larger number than any layman in the field of recreation would be likely to suspect. In lecturing to teachers in different parts of the country, I often have superintendents come to me and say that they are organizing the recreation in their county or that they are planning to for the coming year. Usually they have had very inadequate preparation themselves, but some of them are making a good showing on paper at least. A set of instructions is generally sent out from the superintendent's office, showing the games and events to be participated in, and giving some brief instructions for training.

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Hamilton County, Tennessee, has employed a man during the past year to organize the play of the children at the different schoolhouses about the county. He teaches the games, organizes teams, and arranges for contests and tournaments. A certain amount of time is taken from the school day for this purpose. It has been found that this organizing of the play has increased the attendance nearly twenty per cent.

PROPOSED BILL FOR ILLINOIS

Dr. Earle of Des Plaines, Illinois, introduced a bill into the last legislature of the state of Illinois, calling for the establishment of recreation districts about the state at any time that the taxpayers might desire to do so. Any one hundred voters

could bring this up to a vote at any time, under the conditions of the bill. This bill failed to pass the last legislature, but it will be reintroduced this year. This is interesting, as it is similar to the arrangement that already prevails in the country sections of Germany.

ORGANIZED AT COUNTY TEACHERS' INSTITUTES

Perhaps the most feasible way to organize a play festival at present is at a county teachers' institute. At the institute the whole matter can be brought before the teachers. Its purpose may be explained, and the teachers may be taught the games and their coöperation enlisted in making the festival a success. Definite events should be set for the contests at least three months before the festival is to take place, and, if possible, one or two preliminary contests with other schools should be arranged in order to stimulate the interest. The play festival should be a big event for the town where it is held. The merchants will readily contribute the prizes, which should be inexpensive but real souvenirs of the event.

SHOULD REACH THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

The most serious criticism of the play festivals that have thus far been held in this country is that there has been too little in them for the adults. They have been too largely devoted to the children. The play festival should be a holiday for the whole countryside and should bring out every one. It should be a play exposition or fair where all sorts of recreation are exhibited, especially the particular sorts which are fitted to the needs of the country community. There should be events for the adults, and for the adults of the particular locality, such as fly-casting contests, clay-pigeon shooting, or target practice. In the future there may well be volley ball and indoor baseball.

ATHLETIC EVENTS

In selecting the events the effort should be made to have such a series of games that every child can take part in something. It would be well if a printed list of these events could be sent around by the County Superintendent, so that it could be posted in every schoolroom. This announcement should state also what prizes, if any, are to be awarded to contestants,



THE ONE-HUNDRED-YARD DASH

Play festival in Winnebago County, Illinois

and the teachers should be requested to explain the coming festival to the children and to interest as many as possible to take part. Some of the events that should be scheduled are the following :

Games of the little children, circle games, etc.

Pullaway and Prisoner's Base and other games of low organization.

Playground baseball for boys.

Playground baseball for girls.

Long ball for boys.

Volley ball for boys.

Volley ball for girls.

Tether ball in teams of three.

Tennis, singles and doubles for boys.

Tennis, singles and doubles for girls.

Basket ball for the girls.

Basket ball for the boys.

One-hundred-yard dash for boys under sixteen.

Sixty-yard dash for boys under thirteen.

Sixty-yard dash for boys under sixteen.

Sixty-yard dash for girls under thirteen.

Twenty-five-yard dash for boys under eleven.

Twenty-five-yard dash for girls under eleven.

Running broad jump for boys under sixteen.

Running broad jump for boys under thirteen.

Running high jump for boys under thirteen.

Running high jump for boys under sixteen.

Folk dancing by the older girls, in costume, if possible.

Exhibition drill of the Boy Scouts.

Exhibition of the Camp Fire Girls.

For adults: baseball, quoits, tennis, volley ball, indoor baseball, dancing. In some places horsemanship and lassoing, marksmanship, bait-casting, plowing, etc.

GAMES

A play festival of this kind will require much preliminary work. It should be fully announced in the papers, and something should be kept running for some time beforehand in order to maintain the interest. It will take a large-sized piece of level ground, because many of these events will have to be run simultaneously in order to get through in an afternoon. The athletic field of a college, normal school, or high school would be the best place to hold the festival if there is any such ground centrally located, or the county fair ground. Everything must be in readiness at the appointed time. A large number of officials, twenty or thirty at least, will be

needed to umpire and referee the different games, and there must be many others to help as guides and to assist in keeping order. It will help if each school will carry a banner and have some insignia on the sleeve which will facilitate recognition. The preliminaries should be tried out beforehand or in the morning, so that only the final and more interesting events may be left for the afternoon. A number of these may go on simultaneously, but so far as possible each of the more important games should be given a clear stage for a few minutes, in order to impress the game on the community. These games might be much shortened, but there ought at least to be three games of tennis played with every one looking on, croquet to the first stake, eleven points in volley ball, and three innings in indoor baseball.

Such a play festival as this will set the children to playing with a purpose in the school yards all over the county. It will lead to the introduction of many of these games into the yards of the farm homes, and sooner or later it should create in the community a spirit of play which the country has sadly lacked. Where there is a county school fair this play festival might well be one of the events at this fair, if this fair can be held in the spring. But if the fair is held in the fall, it will probably be better to have them separate, as the children will have to get most of their training while school is in session, and the whole organization would be apt to dissolve during the long summer vacation. Rural schools are very apt to change teachers in the fall, and many of the children drop out, so it will be almost necessary to have the festival either in the spring or, in the South and West, in the winter.

There are a number of normal schools that are now giving a play festival each spring, largely in order to train their students in organizing this work in their own schools later.



FIELD DAY AND PLAY PICNIC AT AMENIA, NEW YORK

It is no light task to change the spirit of a people, to introduce idealism and romance and adventure into a life that has become overserious and overdull, to check the headlong haste that is going nowhere, and promote the earnest pursuit of well-selected aims. This is a problem that applies largely to all, but especially to the half of our people who are living in rural communities. It is one of the largest problems of constructive statesmanship that our educators and legislators have to solve, for the welfare of the country is dependent on the stability and dignity of our farming population, and the capable people will not stay in the country unless rural life is worth while.

THE RURAL PAGEANT

The pageant is in general a condensation of history or literature, most often a representation by the people of a locality of the significant events that took place there. These pageants grew up naturally in the cities of the Old World, where a thousand years of history offered a succession of kings and queens, knights and ladies, of plots and romances and tragedies, that might appear upon the stage in the trappings and equipment and dress of successive ages. To represent thus the local heroes, around whom legend and childhood's fancies had cast the glamour of romance, in the presence often of the king and queen or some foreign potentate, seemed to the peoples of the Middle Ages alike the highest expression of patriotism and of themselves.

The pageants that have been given in Europe have had many centuries of history to draw upon for their characters and events. The people have a reverence for locality and its traditions, arising from the fact that most of the families are the descendants of others that have lived in the city for generations. None of these conditions prevail in this country, and historical pageants can never be as attractive here. Still nearly

all the pageants that have thus far been given have been historical pageants, and most of them have been successful if the weather has been propitious. This serves to show how deep is the appeal which the pageant makes. Most of these have been a mere cross section of American history, representing primarily national events rather than local events or characters. The pageant usually begins with the Indians, to be followed by the pioneers, the French and Indian War, the Revolution, and the Civil War, with some local characters who figured conspicuously in these events. A few symbolic figures are usually seen, and there is often a prophecy of the future. It would seem as though most of the pageants that have been given have followed practically the same outline. These pageants have been held in a considerable number of cities in New England, where there is the most history to represent. They have called out enormous crowds, have sometimes at least been self-supporting, and have awakened a great deal of civic pride and patriotism. Courses in pageantry are now being given in Columbia and, I believe, in a number of other universities. The position of Director of the Pageant has become a profession, and its future seems to be bright.

There are some who think that the pageant is to be one of the largest factors in the rural recreation of the future, and this may well be so, but it must be a pageant of somewhat different sort from the ones that have thus far prevailed with us. There is no local history or historic characters of importance in most country communities. History itself often goes back only a generation, so that the pageant would reveal little that was not already familiar to the oldest inhabitants. The attractiveness of the pageant depends largely on the costumes, and there are no costumers in the country, and there are no fancy or antique garments for hire. The pageant is an out-of-door show and requires the time of many people. In most

sections of the country it must be given in the summer or the late spring or early fall. These are the busy times of the year on the farm, which fact practically excludes farmers from participation in it, though it might be organized from the village people if there were significant events to depict. The pageant at Thetford, Vermont, was a success, and has done much to create a new civic pride and reanimate these dying communities; but it is doubtful if such pageants could be largely duplicated in other rural communities.



PLAY FESTIVAL AT NORMAL SCHOOL IN MACOMB, ILLINOIS

It would be very difficult if not impossible to give a pageant entirely with adults in most rural communities, but I see no reason why this could not be done with comparative ease through the schools. I believe too that the pageant would be likely to prove one of the most educative things in the whole school year. The first pageants that were given in this country, so far as I know, were given by the Ethical Culture School of New York, where they were introduced purely for social and educational reasons. It would not be difficult to hold such a pageant anywhere, if there is a County Superintendent who can form a plan of what is to be represented and assign the

parts to the different schools, so that the whole will fit together like the scenes of a play when it is finished. Each school might be responsible for the representation of some historic or literary event; as, for instance, School No. 1, the lives of the Indians; School No. 2, the trappers and pioneers; School No. 3, an Indian raid, the Stamp Act, or the Boston Tea Party, etc.; or, if conditions were favorable, the schools might represent the industries of the county. Such a pageant would inevitably call out large numbers on account of the number of participants, and the merchants of the county seat could well afford to put up the necessary expense in order to bring the pageant there.

The pageant can be yet more easily organized through a high school, normal school, or college, and it will there have a much wider range of possibilities, as it can represent the history of other countries as well as this, and literature as well as history. Mount Holyoke has shown how interesting a mere dramatic and symbolic representation of the different subjects in the curriculum can be made. This is a form of pageant that could be organized by a high school quite as easily if not more easily than by a college, for the high school has practically the same subjects. It has boys as well as girls, and the girls can make most of the costumes as a part of their regular work in domestic economy. It might take much time to produce a pageant based on "Ivanhoe," but the pageant would surely interest the young people and the community in the story and make it real, as mere reading will never do. Such events will make school more interesting to the young people and will increase the attendance, will bring the school and the community together, and will add a bright thread to country life. If the pageant is given in place of or as a part of the graduation exercises of the school, it will not take much of any one's time, and it will make commencement much more

interesting. The preparation of such a pageant will make history and literature live for the participants, and will be just as educative in a large way as any of the studies of the curriculum. The pageant may be rendered as a service to the community, and as such it may be a training in social service. American communities just now need to learn to play more than they need to learn to work, and the pageant will be a direct preparation for the students in a rightly proportioned life ; for to the actor and the beholder the pageant proclaims " Life does not consist in wealth or wisdom ; it must be lived and enjoyed to be worth while. Realize the past and the present, and feel the joy and the significance of living."

CHAPTER IX

RECREATION FOR THE COUNTRY GIRL

If the country is to be made attractive enough so that the country people will care to live there, this must come through a new emphasis on the home and social life, in less thought of pigs and corn, and more thought of children and living. The country has suffered because it has been dominated by the materialistic point of view of the farmer, who has estimated success too largely in terms of acres, rather than in joy and love and worthy thoughts and purposes, which alone can make life worth living. If this change is to come, it must come mainly through the education of the farm girls to lead in strengthening the home and the social life of the community.

NEITHER THE WORK NOR THE PLAY OF GIRLS AS EDUCATIONAL AS THAT OF BOYS

The farm girl has thus far been very much neglected. It is to be feared that the country has not been as good a place for her as it has been for the boy. I can scarcely imagine a boyhood potentially more educative than that of my brothers and myself on a Michigan farm. During the spring we speared suckers by daylight and torchlight in the creek; in the summer we went swimming from one to three times a day; in the fall we pursued the fleeing pickerel along the banks of the same stream and often came home with a goodly string. We trapped for mink and muskrat and coon, and we hunted rabbits with dog and gun and ferret. From the time we were small children we had our own log houses in the

woods, where we lived much of our leisure time. We had our own little farms, which we fenced with fallen limbs and plowed with a crooked stick in true primitive fashion. We robbed the nests of the bumblebees and became familiar with the habits of all the local birds. There was scarcely a woods or a swamp within a range of three or four miles that we did not know more or less well by the time we were twelve years old. In this life we were almost exactly repeating racial history and following the most fundamental interests of the barbaric age to which we belonged. We passed through this into the age of the nomad caring for the cattle and the pigs and the chickens. We drove the horses and tilled the crops. We were savages, nomads, agriculturists, as the race has been. All of these processes were educative in my case because none of them was carried on to the exclusion of the others, but each in a well-balanced ration entered into the week and the month. As these experiences stand out in memory as no later experiences do, I judge that they made a deeper impression, that they were more effective in developing the imagination, the sympathy, the judgment than any later experiences. They furnished the rugged strength and insight of the Goth on which to build the civilization of the Anglo-Saxon.

As I have observed country girls, it has not seemed to me that their play was similarly educative. It is all right to play at keeping house, but it is not as exciting or stimulating to the imagination as hunting and fishing. To dress dolls is admirable, but the doll is not very energetic in the matter, and as sport it seems a trifle tame. The girl as a rule cannot go swimming or roam the woods with that freedom that her brother exercises. Her work is mostly in the house, away from the nature world which is naturally so wonderful to children. Her duties are monotonous and uninteresting. There is not much adventure in washing the dishes or sweeping the

floor to-day, and the consciousness that it will have to be done over again for some three hundred and sixty-four other days during the year does not add to the zest.

GIRLS' PLAY NOT ENCOURAGED

The boy is constantly encouraged to vigorous play, which is probably the most educative thing in the life of children, but the girl receives no such encouragement. Most children's games are derived from the occupations of our savage fathers, coming largely from the chase and war. The boy inherits an interest in these activities that is less fully felt by the girl. Boys are more interested in running, jumping, and all forms of competition. Throwing and striking are elements in many games, and girls find these coördinations more difficult to acquire. The community encourages the boy to excel, but it calls the girl a tomboy if she runs and jumps and climbs trees and does the other things that she ought to do for her own development. The girl's dress is always unsuitable. When she is small and wears a short dress she cannot climb on a fence or into a tree, run where she is likely to fall down, or even sit on a doorstep and seem modest. She is usually dressed better than her brother and required to keep her clothes cleaner. The girl who is clad in a white dress and told to keep it clean is practically forbidden to play. When puberty comes, and the girl puts on her long dress, she is still more hampered by her clothing. The results of these conditions are easily discovered. The girl at puberty has only three quarters of the lung capacity of the boy of the same age. Her blood is almost never in as good a condition. Her activity is going to be restricted by her long dress and custom in the years that follow, and these conditions ought to be reversed. I have given courses in twenty-two different normal schools, where many

of the young women were country girls, and I always find that there are many of them who cannot run without waddling ; that they have little play spirit ; that they will seldom keep track of the score in a game of volley ball or indoor baseball, and will often be hit by the ball before they realize where it is. This can only mean that through the years that have gone before most of these young women have not played as much as they should.

THE ADOLESCENT GIRL REQUIRES SOME ROMANCE AND
ADVENTURE

I do not plan to write at this time of recreation for the little girls, but rather of recreation for that most critical time that lies between the dawn of puberty and marriage, the period in the country that as a rule lies between fourteen and about twenty. This is the age of romance, of beauty and dreams. It is a period of hope, when all things seem possible, a time of religious fervor, of the love of music and art and poetry, when all the more delicate charms of women make their appearance and when each demands time for its development. The natural idealism and romance of the period is one of the most delicate and beautiful things in life. It is a time when life should have its duties, its sense of service to others, for this is the inner meaning of the ripening functions of sex which are fitting the girl to become a mother. It should not be a time of idleness, but there must be some leisure for dreams and pleasure and idealism. The natural altruism of the period often leads the girl to immolate herself on the altar of home drudgery ; but to do this is to sacrifice the charm of later years. It is from living in the castles of Spain that we are often fitted to live in the real palaces of life. Drudgery that is borne to save the overworked mother at home may be ennobling to the spirit, but it is a March

wind upon the bloom of youth. It is the lack of adventure and romance that leads many of the young people to leave the farm. The "country life problem" cannot be solved without restoring to the country some of the adventure and romance that it had in pioneer days. "Man shall not live by bread alone." Life demands its thrills and inspirations to be worth living. It is these that must furnish the purpose, the insight, and the motive for what the long hours of work must accomplish; and work without a purpose is generally drudgery, as a life without a purpose is the flotsam and jetsam of the sea of humanity.

This is also the most dangerous period of life morally. The beginning of puberty is a period of storm and stress, a period of curiosity, of temptation, of a new sense of independence. The girl feels that she has become a woman and that she should no longer be kept in leading strings. Freedom is apt to mean license in the beginning, whether the freedom be of peoples or individuals. About the beginning of this period the girl finishes her course in the district school. So far as she herself is concerned she probably has no purpose for the years that lie between her graduation and her marriage. Of course a few country girls go on to high school and college, but the vast majority do not. If she comes from a well-to-do home she scorns to work out. She probably expects to have the time of her life during the next few years, to make conquests of all the young men of the neighborhood and finally marry some billionaire from the city. It is the hopeful, joyous, romantic outlook on life that is the charm of these young girls. It is well for them to have these joys in anticipation if they cannot have them in fact, for they are thereby gaining experience vicariously and a sympathetic contact with a larger life than the neighborhood affords. There are too many country girls who have all of this

romance, and hope, and sweet idealism crushed out of them within a year or two by a too materialistic home, which looks upon all of these dreams as foolishness. The woman who loses the ideals and dreams of this period may be a good servant or housewife or even a good woman of business, but she can never have the delicate charm which is woman's right. Country life must not be too tame and common. To kill the romance of youth is to blight the future. This is one of the large problems for the Country Life Movement to solve.

GIRL'S SCHOOL TRAINING UNSATISFACTORY

The school from which the girl has graduated at the beginning of the period probably has given her almost no preparation for the years that are coming on. The problems of the arithmetic, the grammar, the geography, and even the history have nothing of importance to offer toward the problems she has to solve. Her studies have left her ignorant of the things that are most vital to both her welfare and the welfare of the community.

The one kind of knowledge that is of paramount importance to a girl of fourteen is knowledge of herself, to know the laws of sex and its hygiene. Country girls are not ignorant of sex functions, but of the saving knowledge of its laws and dangers they are almost entirely ignorant. This ignorance leaves them a prey to many needless and morbid fears which repress without cause their natural joyousness. The next most important knowledge for a maturing young woman is the art and craft of the home maker, the ability to sew, cook, and make the house attractive. As a prospective mother she needs to know about the care of children, and the chief causes of infant mortality. She needs to know how to turn the house into a home by organizing its social life. For the charm and largeness of her daily life, she must have learned

to know and love the nature world around her, and must have formed a taste for good reading. All of these things are essential to the welfare of the years to come, while cube root and European cities and the laws of syntax can never have more than a casual or accidental relation to this welfare.

NEED OF EXTENSION SCHOOLS

Country girls very often used to attend the rural school in the wintertime until they were twenty years of age, whereas now they are usually ready to graduate by the time they are fourteen or fifteen. The very natural suggestion is, why not have them go on in the winter season as they once did, and in these years learn something that will be helpful to them in the life that they are called to lead? The work is not usually very pressing in the country from the middle of October to the middle of April. This is a short high-school year, but if our schools had a five-year course, like those of Denmark, which also have a term of six months, it would be possible to give the farm boys and girls the definite knowledge which they need in their daily lives, and that sort of training which would help them to build up the community as well. These winter schools for the older boys and girls of the farm are already well under way for the state of Iowa. A series of extension schools has just been established by state law in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, and I know not what other states, and we may hope that the other states will soon see the light. There should be such a school in every township in the United States.

NEED OF PLAY

Country girls do not play games, as a rule, after they are thirteen or fourteen years old. This is the time that the boys drop the old individualistic and personally competitive games and take up the team games, such as baseball and basket ball.

But the girls have never played team games until the last two or three decades, and even to-day there are comparatively few who are playing. The life of country girls is rather tame and prosaic at best; the girl is always in danger of losing her play spirit, which is the charm of girlhood. The country girl, despite the fact that she is living in the country, often gets very little of the open air, or exercise of a vigorous sort. She is often stooped and round-shouldered from her work. She needs the exercise and the society that would come from belonging to an athletic club. There is land in plenty, there are girls enough, and if only some one can be found to take the initiative, it is possible, as a rule, to secure the equipment.

CROQUET

Croquet hardly deserves to be ranked as athletics, but it is a game that should be played at every country home. The equipment costs little; the ground is easily laid out. It is social, — nearly as good as a pipe or a cup of tea to get acquainted over, — and older people will play with pleasure as well as the younger ones. It does not take long, and serves well to fill in the chinks of time. It is the only outdoor game that is now being generally played at country homes.

TENNIS

I do not know that I ever heard of a tennis tournament in the country. But why should not such tournaments be played? The country is in every way adapted to tennis. It takes much room for the number of players, and the country has plenty of room. It needs only two players, and the country lacks numbers. A game can be played on the lawn with no equipment except a couple of posts, a net, racket, and balls. If a dirt court is to be made, the farm has the scrapers and other implements needed, and it probably can be made in

the spare time, so that the cost will be very little. Country girls should play tennis in order to develop grace and activity, alertness of mind and the spirit of play. Tennis also has the great advantage of being a game in which girls and boys can play together. It is a good wholesome social occasion for the meeting of the sexes, such as the country badly needs. The rivalry of play is likely to turn the mind away from sentimental thoughts of the wrong type and to breed, instead, a wholesome emulation and respect. The great trouble with this, as with all recreation in the country, is the lack of some one to get it started. If there is a leader, either from the Y.W.C.A., the Camp Fire Girls, or from the community, it should not be difficult. About once a month the girls might play doubles with young men partners. If there are grounds at a township school, the tournament games might well be played there on Saturday afternoons.

VOLLEY BALL

Probably the best game for the country boys and girls alike is volley ball (for description of game see Part II, Chapter VI). Social morality is probably at quite as low an ebb in the country as it is in the city. The reason for it is largely the lack of wholesome social occasions. There are few social gatherings, and the young people meet for solitary rides and walks at a time when sex temptations are sure to be strong, and they have not much to talk about. Anything which will enable the young people to see each other in a more wholesome way will be good. If four or five couples would play volley ball together one afternoon a week, the wholesome rivalry and coöperation of play would do more to overcome the sentimental giggling relationship that is apt to exist than anything else I know. Here again the trouble is in getting started; this serves to emphasize once more that the real

weakness of the country is a lack of leadership. Volley ball is not much fun until you know the game and have acquired some skill. It is possible for an energetic girl to get it started herself from a mere book of rules, but she must be a real leader.

INDOOR BASEBALL

Indoor baseball, which is played out of doors almost altogether at present, is an excellent game for girls; but it requires eighteen players, which is too large a number for most country communities to furnish easily. It is an excellent game for both young men and women, and it has the advantage that the young men at least will know the game. It is also a good game for the young men and women to play together.

GIRLS' CANNING AND COOKING CLUBS

In some sections the girls' canning and cooking contests are adding a great deal to the interest in country life, and in not a few localities the goods that are put up become the source of a considerable income. The training is a part of the regular trade of the housewife, and the social opportunities are wholesome and valuable. If it is possible for the corn clubs and the canning clubs to meet together at times, this will add to the interest. The canning club may also meet at certain times as an athletic club and have games and folk dances or a Camp Fire meeting. Undoubtedly the play movement in the country would receive a more hearty support from the farmers if it were in some way connected with the general industrial movement that is bringing in the new agriculture and the new home. This also puts the movement where it belongs as a part of country life. I do not know that any canning clubs have thus far done this; but, again, why not? No club can be successful as a club and devote all its

energies to business. The grange has its literary and social occasions. A large part of all the boys' and girls' clubs in the city, for whatever purpose organized, have athletics and games as one of their regular activities.

THE LOVE OF NATURE

Farm people have not learned to appreciate nature. Children are interested in all natural objects; but this usually



SEWING CONTEST, BASED ON SEWING A BUTTON AND PATCH ON CLOTH
AND MAKING A BUTTONHOLE

receives little encouragement, as it is apt not to occur to the parents that to know and love the flowers that grow in the meadow and the birds that sing by the roadside may be the source of as much pleasure and profit as to locate the cities of Asia or to conjugate the verb *amo*.

The education that country children require cannot be given largely indoors. It must be given in part, at least, in the playground, the garden, the fields, and by the roadside.

If the farmer loves nature, he finds himself constantly surrounded by a hundred things that speak to his spirit. If he gets no pleasure from the song of the robin or the bluebird, from the rustle of the leaves, the waving of the grain, the thousand blended colors of a distant landscape, or the glories of the autumn foliage, he is missing most of those peculiar joys that the country can offer.

WALKING

There is no better way to cultivate a love for nature than through walking. The man who drives, or rides, or autos has his attention too much distracted. He usually goes too fast. He cannot notice the song of the bird, the color of the flower, the gentle gurgle of the brook. He does not attend to the thousand delicate tones of color and feeling in the air and the face of nature. Walking is peculiarly applicable for people living in small villages, because as a rule they do not own horses, and a short trip takes them off the pavement. The farmer usually has plenty of exercise and fresh air also, while the villager often does not.

We have imported most of our education from Germany, but thus far we have not imported walking. There is a national walkers' association in Germany, and a local walkers' club in nearly every town and city; but walking is not regarded as either recreation or exercise in America. Walking is the only way that one can ever come really to know a country, its products, and its people. The best books of travel that have ever been written have been views afoot. It is almost the only way to cultivate a love for nature in her varied moods. In Germany they are getting up a series of guides for walking parties that cover every section of the country. There are few, if any, parts of this country that do not have many points of interest within a radius of ten miles, yet few of them are

known by the dwellers of the countryside. Country people are apt to regard travel as the one great opportunity of life, but they do not realize that the best preparation and equivalent for travel is the intensive study of the locality. If one has not learned to know that and has not acquired the power of observation, a trip through Europe will not teach him much, for, as Emerson says, that person who has learned to observe the significant things will see more that is worth seeing in a trip to the country town than another would in a trip through Europe.

Walking is the most fundamental means of overcoming country isolation. It requires no expensive equipment or preparation. It is within the possibilities of all who are not crippled. It is healthful and productive of intimate knowledge and inspiration. The ability to walk gives a great sense of independence, because with it one can go and come as one pleases. It is not really much of a task for one who is leading a vigorous life to walk twenty miles a day. The farmer follows the plow and the drag at least as far during a considerable part of the year. The well-developed country girl would not mind the walk if she once had the idea of taking it.

In most sections of the country there will be within five miles an interesting lake and grove, a stone quarry, a mine, a stock farm, a cave, or other object of interest. What could be more interesting or appropriate than to get up a small party of girls and boys, young men and women, walk over to the place of interest, have a camp fire, a picnic dinner, play games, or go swimming, and come home? I should like to see, for the future of the race, some requirement that no young woman would be granted a marriage license unless she could walk fifteen miles straight off without undue weariness. I should not put this into the statutes to prevent people from getting married, but because, if such a thing were even

suggested as desirable and girls understood that this was a standard that they were supposed to come up to, they would soon surpass the standard of their own accord.

RIDING HORSEBACK

Horseback riding is an accomplishment of unequal value in different parts of the country. It is almost necessary in the South and parts of the West. It can be pursued to a considerable extent in most country villages and more or less in every section of the open country. Horseback riding is excellent exercise for women. It is generally regarded as a real accomplishment. It is good sport, and it is one of the most wholesome ways for the boys and girls to have their social times together. It makes possible the visit to picnic groves and the neighboring towns. It extends the possible range of acquaintance and experience. It brings in a new form of recreation and makes possible a wider choice of friends. It overcomes to no small degree the isolation of the country home. It is one of the most popular and expensive forms of recreation in the city, which only the rich can afford. It is never as attractive in the city, as there is not much pleasure in riding over the hard pavements and dodging the automobiles and carriages that throng the city streets. Horseback riding enables one to visit a distant picnic grove, to bathe in the lake, or to go fishing. One of the greatest lacks of the countryside is that every one knows every one else so well that all the romance is gone. It is around the strange and the unfamiliar that all the legends and wonderful tales and imaginations grow up. The country girl is apt to fall in love with the city youth, because she can weave all sorts of imaginations about his life, which she cannot well spin about the neighbor's son whom she has known from childhood. He may be a good fellow and a good friend, but

he is commonplace because an everyday acquaintance. It is difficult to make him the subject of a romance. It is an advantage to have acquaintances in this outer circle whom daily contact has not made commonplace. There are also doubtless dangers in such relationships, but they are almost necessary to the idealism of love.

DRIVING

Driving is the principal form of recreation in the country at present. Nearly every young man who aspires to go with a young lady feels that a carriage is a necessary prerequisite. The family carriage seems to be disappearing, and the almost universal conveyance is what is known as the covered buggy. It is a vehicle built for two, and it is evidently intended for the two to sit close together, for it has a very narrow seat. The buggy, after the shades begin to fall, admits of as much privacy as may be desired. Nearly every hired man is in possession of one. The buggy does not carry a chaperon. Even if the girl may resent a familiarity, she cannot move farther away, and we may well question the custom of allowing young people to go out riding so freely at all hours of the night in such a conveyance.

Every country girl should learn to harness a horse and to drive, because this makes her independent and helps to break the isolation of the country home. It enables the girl to belong to a club, to attend church, the social center, parties, or any other occasion that may interest her. Driving is a luxury in the city, which few can afford, but it lies within the reach of most of the people of the countryside. It is more attractive in the country because there is not the strain of dodging the endless traffic of the streets. The single buggy does not promote a wholesome social relationship between the country boys and girls. It is much overworked in this

particular, but for pleasure driving in the daytime and as an aid in overcoming rural isolation it may add much to country life.

ROWING AND PADDLING

It is not a great accomplishment to row a boat or paddle a canoe. If one has the strength, it can be learned in an afternoon ; not so that one will be a champion, but so that he can get along. The ability to row and paddle often affords a pleasant afternoon that would not otherwise be possible, and in some places it may be a constant means of recreation. Both of these are excellent exercise. To take a boatload of friends across the lake or the river to spend a half holiday on an island or on some high bank is one of the pleasanest of occasions. It is often possible to put a tent and some provisions into a boat and drift down a river for a hundred miles or so, camping out at night on the banks, and replenishing the larder with fresh fish from the river and game from the waterside. The river often gives one an unobstructed view into the heart of the forest, and one drifts down among the wild things so noiselessly that they are not even aware of one's presence. There is a sort of romance and sense of adventure in drifting thus with a river, and beholding its constant change of scene ; but, if the river is not too swift, it is still more vigorous and charming to row or paddle upstream, as it is always more interesting to go up a narrowing river where the fields and the forests are constantly closing in upon us than it is to go down a stream that is getting wider and more sluggish and civilized as we proceed. The one drawback to the idealism of such a life is apt to be the mosquitoes, but if one camps early and builds a good fire, he should not suffer much. Thick gloves and veils may be necessary. It will usually be possible to select a time when mosquitoes will not bother.

AUTOMOBILING

Young people are leaving the country for the town for three principal reasons : lack of society and amusements, the lack of adventure, and the lack of romance. The rural delivery, the telephone, and the interurban trolley are each doing something to break the isolation ; but probably the telephone and the rural delivery do as much to prevent sociability as to promote it, and the interurban is very limited in its application. Walking, riding, driving, and canoeing are all wholesome ways of overcoming isolation and adding to life something of poetry and romance and nature-love at the same time. Perhaps the automobile is the most effective means of overcoming all of these objections at once. The person who is the possessor of a car in a country of fairly good roads cannot well be isolated, for there are usually half a dozen towns within a drive of an hour or two. The autoist enlarges his range, and becomes a member of a larger neighborhood. It is only a short and delightful trip to attend church or the theater in a town twenty miles distant.

The auto is rather rare in the country in general thus far, except in the Middle West, where it has become common in some sections. It is a good deal of a nuisance on country roads to every one except the autoists. It does not promote the contemplative sort of appreciation of nature, but it seems to offer certain experiences which the country needs. The young man who dashes out upon the highway in a modern car on a pleasant spring or summer day is following in the steps of the knight errant of old. He is mounted on a far swifter and more powerful charger, and the world lies before him. He can go where he will, and everywhere there is the possibility of an adventure or a romance. To him the country need not be tame or isolated.

There are social advantages also in the size of the conveyance for the young people. The auto is seldom built to carry two. It can take the family, or it may carry a party of young people. Almost any kind of a party of young people is better than the perpetual driving in the single buggy. There is, however, the social danger that the auto soon brings a party into a section where they are unknown and do not feel responsible. People are always more reckless under such conditions.

RECREATION CALENDAR

In some Catholic countries there is a religious holiday in nearly every week, and there are processions and pageants and other features that furnish recreation to the people. We have no religious holidays in this country and only four or five of any kind that are generally observed by adults. Christmas and the Fourth of July are great events in the child world, and are looked forward to for a long time. There were once several other festivals which were common in country sections, such as the corn huskings, logrollings, barn raisings, and quiltings of pioneer days. These have disappeared, and there should be a persistent effort to develop others. There should be at least one occasion a month when the whole community would meet together for a social time and merry-making. If there is no suggestion of the season that these occasions should be organized, the time goes by and nothing is done. It would be rash to make up offhand such a calendar, which must necessarily be the growth of years and of much experiment. I shall not attempt here to suggest such a series for the neighborhood, but it would seem that the following occasions might be put down on the calendar for the young people to begin with, and the Social Center, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Camp Fire Girls, and other rural organizations should undertake to organize them.

A COASTING PARTY

The party should be held on a moonlight night at a house that is adjacent to the coasting place. Young people may drive over and put up their horses or blanket them for the evening. The party may take the form of snowshoeing, skiing, or coasting with a bobsled. After an hour or two out of doors the company should come in, crack nuts, pop corn, and have general social games. Coasting is more or less dangerous, but there is a romance about the flying sled and the moonlight and the laughter that the country cannot afford to lose. It is one of the brightest bits of poetry that life affords. It is also a social occasion for the meeting of boys and girls that is wholly wholesome. In a level country this might be merely a sleigh ride, or in the South a drive.

A SUGAR PARTY

The making of maple sirup is not an industry of every locality. It is one of the early experiences that has often gone with the pioneer and the forests, but a sugar party is still possible in many sections. At the time of the sap boiling, arrangements should be made for a party at the sap house. A moonlight night should be chosen if possible, and two or three of the young men should collect the young people in sleighs, so that the going and coming may be as pleasant as the party itself. The impressions of such a night are worth more than days or even weeks of the commonplace. The gaunt tree tops, the dark shadows, and the gleaming snow are engraved on the memory in enduring lines. The backward glance still sees the sap house stand under its sheltering trees as though it were yesterday. The glow of the fire, the smell of the sweetened steam, all these go into the picture, to which youth and joy and love and romance lend their own

brilliant colors. To make the occasion perfect the girls should make the biscuits on the spot. The wax that is made on the snow with the right partner is not to be compared with any other confection made by human hands. Surely such a feast the Greeks must have had in mind when they spoke of the ambrosia of the gods. Such an evening is apt to be a maximal experience in the lives of the young people who take part. It stirs the nature to its inner depths, arouses dormant sympathies and interests, and brings into action faculties that otherwise might have slumbered on to the end. It is beyond price in human values, and all life is richer for it.

A CORN ROAST

In some places something more exciting than a corn roast can doubtless be planned for the early autumn, but it may be made the occasion anywhere for a picnic, a boat trip, or a pleasant ride or gallop to some neighboring lake or stream. The corn roast might be either an afternoon or an evening occasion, according to the desire of the company. Probably in most cases it will be more attractive to make the roast a feature of an afternoon picnic. In that case it is well to put the supper pretty late, so as to get the effect of the camp fire while roasting the corn. There is nothing unusual or wonderful about it, but it makes a good social occasion.

PICNICS

Almost the only form of community recreation in the open country is the picnic. The picnic, as it now exists, is mostly a Sunday-school affair intended chiefly for the little children, but it is well adapted to promote the social life of the young men and women. The great evil of society in the country in general is that so far as the young people are concerned it

is a society of two and two, and there are very few occasions when a whole neighborhood meets. A society of two and two is always dangerous, because it lacks the restraint of public opinion. It needs a vigorous group-sociability back of individual "sparking." The picnic grove should have facilities for boating and swimming and all sorts of games and tournaments. The lunch is an advantage, as it draws the group together. If young men more frequently had a chance to sample the cooking of the ladies of their choice, it would doubtless lead to a considerable improvement in cooking, wiser choices, and greater domestic happiness. It is a good thing if there can be a bonfire, so that corn and potatoes or marshmallows may be roasted on the spot. At times the wagons of the consolidated school or a hayrack may be used to collect and distribute the young people, so as to make a social occasion of the going and coming as well as the picnic itself. In many localities there are numerous places where a delightful time might be had, which would have the charm of novelty and wildness in addition to all of the natural advantages of the location. The picnic already exists in the country, and it can easily be developed to be the center of the social life for four or five months of the year. If the picnic grove may be at the consolidated school, and the picnic may become a regular occasion for Saturday afternoons from April to November, it will be ideal. This would give an opportunity for all the tournaments and matched games that there seems to be no opportunity for at present. In the colder months the meetings may take place in the consolidated school, and thus a real social center for the country may be built up. Such picnics and meetings would do much to introduce the spirit of play and joy and sociability into the open country and to keep the boys and girls on the farm. It is a practical solution of the isolation of the open country.

A number of school districts are making use of a tree claim and an adjoining school yard in this way in Barnes County, North Dakota.

CAMPING OUT

Camping out is an experience that every girl and every boy should have. It is one of the movements that is coming in through a number of new organizations and through a new appreciation of its value. The Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the settlements, the institutional churches, and a number of private schools now either have a permanent camp or else camp out in different places each year. In nearly every case the campers are city boys and girls. They have to pay their railroad fares from and to the city and purchase all of the equipment and provisions that are needed. The boys and girls in the country have a peculiar advantage in regard to camping. There is usually a place not far away to which they can drive in two or three hours' time. All of the implements that are necessary in order to make a camp and establish themselves are at hand. If tents are available, the cost of a week's camping out need not be any greater than a week at home.

Country girls need the experience as much or more than city girls. There have been long æons of human history in which our ancestors have gathered around the camp fire at night, when they have led lives by the streams and in the forest. The brain has been developed through such experiences, and it responds to them as it can to no others. There are certain sides of our nature that will be undeveloped if we have not had the camp fire for our teacher. The experience that softens the heart and kindles friendship and the imagination is no less educative than the knowledge that instructs the head. Camping intensifies friendship, and friendship furnishes the motive and the reward of the most of our efforts.

It doubles our strength for achievement. It gives us most of the joy of life. It is the riches of the spirit and quite as worthy of effort as wealth or learning. A group that have camped out together for a week will be better friends for the rest of their lives. Camping tends especially to bring up the memory of pioneer days. It is a valuable experience for one who has always slept in the house merely to sleep in a tent. The new surroundings call up new thoughts and



A PLAYGROUND CAMP NEAR HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

rouse one to new possibilities. The girl who has never been away from home is apt to be very dependent. Camping is one of the best ways in the world to teach self-reliance. Country life tends to be tame and monotonous, altogether too much so for high-spirited young people. Camping brings in a touch of romance and adventure such as rural life once had, but which it has largely lost.

Perhaps the farm wife needs a vacation more than any other person in the country, yet thus far she has never had one. It is difficult for her to get the time, and the expense

of summer resorts seems prohibitive to a class who are accustomed to very meager expenditures in money. So far as the farm wife ever has a vacation it is almost invariably in the form of a visit to a relative. A vacation is usually thought to be impossible for her. It is impossible, if she thinks it is ; but most impossibilities lie in the imagination. There are times when it would be difficult for her to get away, and there are also times after the corn is planted in the spring, after the wheat is harvested, and toward the end of August when farm work is not very pressing and when it would be quite possible to leave the house in the care of an older daughter or a hired girl or a neighbor, and for the most of the family to go off for a vacation of a week or two. If the farm wife has camped out as a girl, this will be apt to appeal to her. It will not be a life without work, but the work need not be strenuous, and there is the change of scene and the out-of-door life. A mere change of scene often suffices to dispel our worries.

Extensive equipment is not needed. The simpler the furnishings of a tent the more comfortable everybody always is. Every farm home ought to own a tent, as it serves as a playhouse for the children and aids in many of their dramatic games. It gives an opportunity for the boys at least to sleep out during the warmer parts of the year, and there are almost limitless possibilities in the way of camping, hunting, fishing, picnicking, and inexpensive travel if one has a tent that are scarcely possible without one. A tent is a real safeguard against tuberculosis and a developer of courage, hardihood, and imagination. Besides tents, the camping party will need bedding, cooking utensils, matches, an ax, a toilet set, a change of clothes, hammocks, and a few books and games for rainy days. For the sake of courage and peace of mind it will be well to have a gun or two also, and a big dog

to guard the camp against mischief and prowlers. Guns will also be useful for target practice, and a dog is often an advantage, as some one may get lost.

A camping party ought always to be a group of friends or at least people who only lack intimacy in order to become so. It would be best that the girls should belong to the same club or Sunday-school class or Camp Fire. There ought to be ten or twelve of an average age of not less than fifteen, and some girls of eighteen or so if possible. There should be a chaperon or leader, of course. Here is likely to be the greatest difficulty, as chaperons do not grow on farms. If there is a county Y.W.C.A. or an organization of the Camp Fire Girls or the leader of a girls' Sunday-school class who is not too busy, the leaders of these groups would be the natural chaperons of such a camp; but even if these organizations do not exist, it is probable that a diligent search will still reveal available material of some sort in the neighborhood.

It would be well, perhaps necessary, for the girls to bring some of their older brothers or fathers along to help lay out the camp and get things started. A site should be selected with good drainage. It should overlook, if possible, some pleasant body of water where there will be an opportunity for swimming, fishing, and boating. It should be located in the woods for the sake of the shade and the fire wood. It should be on high ground away from any swamp or marsh, so as to avoid the mosquitoes. It should be near a spring or some other source of good drinking water. It is well to pitch the three or four tents that are needed around a hollow square or in a semicircle, so as to have the camp fire in the center at night. It adds to the charm if the fire shines up on the branches and trunks of great forest trees. If it is in the land of the hemlock and balsam, the best bed in the world can be made of the smaller branches, or one can make a real spring

mattress by laying light saplings across logs and putting the boughs on top of them. There should be about four girls to a tent.

The days may well be spent in swimming, rowing, games, and making collections of flowers, etc. But the nights ought to be the most attractive times in camp. It is then that the camp fire draws its circle together, and experiences are related and plans made for the morrow. It is the time for confidences and songs and stories. Sometimes during the encampment it would be well for the girls to give a party and invite their friends. Such a camp in prospect and in memory will keep the days a long time before and after from being dull.

THE SOCIAL CENTER

In order to carry out the social program that has been outlined thus far it is necessary that there should be some organization of the social life. This cannot well take place unless there is some common meeting ground or social center, for the reason that the young people as a whole in country communities now meet together so seldom that organization is practically impossible. It is necessary either that there shall be some place where they can meet at certain times or that there shall be an organizer in the community of more than usual ability. At the social center there should be some section if possible that is especially reserved for the young people, or at any rate some opportunity should be provided for them to get together by themselves occasionally, though they should also meet at times with the others. This would make possible the organization of clubs, camps, athletic contests, camp fires, or any other groups that seemed desirable.

SOCIAL MORALITY IN THE COUNTRY

There is no prostitution in the country, but there is probably no less of the social vice there than in the city. This complicates the problems, as it also furnishes the most urgent reason for organized recreation for the youths and maidens of the country districts. For the most part there is almost no society for country young people except mixed society. The work of the farm and the farm home often seems rather tame to high-spirited young people. If the girl remains in the country, there is no other business open to her except the management of some farm home, and her thoughts are naturally turned toward marriage. The young lawyer or doctor may live in a boarding house, but there are no boarding houses in the country; a wife is a part of the necessary equipment of the farmer. Farm life is monotonous; the romance which is craved by all youth may not find that vicarious expression in art, music, the drama, and social service as it may in the city; it is almost entirely concentrated around the experience of love. It is difficult to weave romances about those who are so intimately known as are the country neighbors' sons, and hence the tendency for sentiment to slip down to its physical basis in sex. Country girls, as a rule, do not have chaperons, but nevertheless they are allowed to go freely with the young men without this safeguard. In the unorganized community the walks and drives are generally solitary, and there are abundant opportunities for seclusion. There is often not much to talk about or to divert the mind from fundamental impulses, and a temptation that is dwelt upon is generally yielded to in the end. The organization of society is one of the greatest safeguards against this condition. If there is a vigorous social life among the young people of the community, there will be

less of the solitary kind of two-and-two society, and universal custom requires a pretty high standard of conduct in company. The young person who has a full and satisfying social life has an abundance of things to think about, so that the mind is not so apt to dwell on instinctive desires. Perhaps the strongest restraint that can be imposed upon the individual is the restraint of public opinion, and public opinion is strong in proportion as the contact of the members of the society or community is intimate. A girl or boy who is leading a life of monotonous drudgery is apt to become reckless in his craving for excitement and adventure. Public opinion is almost ineffective if he or she has no general society. We are not much disgraced by anything that may happen to us among strangers, but we feel its sting in pretty close proportion to the intimacy of those who are aware of the facts. These well-known psychological laws seem to indicate that the organization of society in the country will be the greatest safeguard of country morality.

DANCING

The sentiment of the country church and the country itself has been almost uniformly against dancing. Its contentions have probably been wise. The dances that have been held in the country have generally not been safe places for boys and girls to go. There can be no question of the social dangers inherent in dancing at its best, and dances that have no safeguards, that are held in the woods or in hotels for unchaperoned parties of young people, where the tough comes with his whisky bottle—and some are sure to have taken too much—are as dangerous as dances in the city dives. There is, however, a great new interest in dancing at the present time; in many of the high schools and some of the elementary schools about the country both girls and boys are

being taught to dance. The churches are changing their attitude toward dancing, and there is likely to be a great deal more dancing in the country than there has been. The dangers inherent in dancing are such that, if it is practiced, every possible safeguard should be thrown around it. Dances should not be held in the woods or country hotels, drinking should not be allowed, and careful parents should see that their girls are chaperoned. The only places where dancing is likely to be reasonably safe are the church, the school, the grange, the social center, and the private house. Of course it is difficult to safeguard the way home, and this danger should be recognized. Some dances and some methods of dancing are more dangerous than others. All kinds of dancing where the partner is drawn close to the person should be frowned upon and rigorously excluded; girls should refuse to dance with the "huggers." If the dances can be held at the social center, where the whole community is in attendance and the dancing is only one feature on the evening's program, it is as safe as dancing can be made and is one of the best ways to promote sociability. It must be remembered that a considerable part of the danger of the country dance is due to the fact that dancing is generally tabooed and has to seek out-of-the-way places for its expression. So also the taboo keeps away the better class of young people who are careful of their reputations and leaves it to those who are more or less reckless. One cannot expect much but demoralization from dancing under such conditions.

Something might be done in most communities in the way of substituting the old square dances—the Virginia reel, the quadrille, and the minuet—for the omnipresent waltz and two-step. There is also a great interest in folk dancing just now. Folk dancing is very vigorous,—one of the best forms of physical training we have,—so that it is now used in

nearly all gymnasiums purely for its physical value. Folk dances as a rule have almost no social dangers. They offer an excellent opportunity for getting acquainted and might be promoted in a neighborhood where any other kind of dancing would be frowned upon. If the community will take the initiative in teaching the girls folk dancing, they will probably be doing as much as can be done to protect them from the dangers of the other type. A Victrola machine with ten folk-dance records can be purchased for about fifty dollars, so folk dancing may be independent of the musicians.

THE COUNTY Y.W.C.A.

The great need of the social life in the country is organization and leadership. In whatever form this leadership comes, if it has wholesome ideals behind it, it should be welcome. The county Y.W.C.A. is still too new an institution for one to plan for it in any particular county with the expectation that it will be found there. It is yet in its first stages of development, and only a few counties have been organized, but it appeals to such a fundamental need that it is safe to predict for it the same rapid development that the county Y.M.C.A. has had. Its work is along much the same lines — Bible study, athletics, canning and cooking clubs, camping in the summer, and an annual conference or convention. All these things are much needed by country girls, and any one who will organize them for the country community should surely be welcome. If any country community becomes interested in the welfare of its girls, it may well take the initiative in getting this work started. Miss Jessie Field of New York City is the national secretary and would be glad to coöperate with communities that wish to make a beginning.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS

The Camp Fire Girls is an organization recently formed under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Luther H. Gulick. It resembles in many ways the Boy Scouts. In fact, it has been developed largely on account of the desire of some girls to become scouts. While its name speaks of the camp fire, a better name might really be Fireside Girls, as it is a method of lending a certain romance to the labors and duties of the



THE FESTIVAL OF THE FIRST FIRE MAKER, HANOUK CAMP FIRE GIRLS

home, to get the girl to acquire as a part of an initiation into a romantic organization the knowledge that she will need as a woman and a mother. In a way it resembles the initiation ceremonies of many primitive tribes which are given by the old women at the time of puberty. This initiation teaches the secret knowledge and mysteries of the tribe and may be regarded as a preparation for marriage.

There are three orders of the Camp Fire Girls, as there are also of the Boy Scouts. The first is the Wood Gatherer,

corresponding to the Tenderfoot Scout. Before a girl can become a Wood Gatherer she must be able to repeat the following :

It is my desire to become a Camp Fire Girl and to obey the law of the Camp Fire, which is

Seek beauty,
Give service,
Pursue knowledge,
Be trustworthy,
Hold on to health,
Glorify work.

On becoming a Wood Gatherer the girl is given a silver ring, which is the distinctive badge of the order. The applicants must be twelve years of age to be eligible for membership. A local group, or Camp Fire, consists of from six to twenty girls. The leader, who must be an adult, is called the Guardian of the Fire or simply the Guardian. The girls come together weekly, and once a month they hold a ceremonial meeting, or council fire. At this gathering they are supposed to wear, if possible, their ceremonial dress, which is of galatea of a special pattern. This dress may be made by the girls themselves at a cost of about sixty cents. Before a girl can be advanced to the second degree, the Fire Maker, she must acquire a number of honors, which means that she shall become skillful in certain housewifely and motherly arts. These may be cooking, the making of bread of different kinds, the recognizing of different baby cries and their meaning; she should also know the chief causes of infant mortality and how at least one city has reduced the rate. The girls are supposed to sleep with their windows open and to learn how to swim. They are encouraged to take long walks and

to observe the common birds and flowers. Before a girl can be a Fire Maker she must be able to repeat :

As fuel is brought to the fire,
So I purpose to bring
My strength,
My ambition,
My heart's desire,
My joy,
And my sorrow
To the fire
Of human kind ;
For I will tend,
As my fathers have tended,
And my fathers' fathers
Since time began,
The fire that is called
The love of man for man,
The love of man for God.

The third degree is that of Torch Bearer. Before a girl may attain to this degree she must have mastered many things in the distinctly feminine arts, and she must also have trained at least three other girls in some of the honors of the lower degrees. The training that is given for the Camp Fire Girls is much more fundamental and important than the training that is given in most schools. It is education in the arts of living, in health and strength, in a love for nature, and in skill in doing the things that the housewife is supposed to know — the craft of the home and the mother and, in its later honors, the craft of citizenship as well. Over all is thrown the glamor and romance of the camp fire and ceremonial. The great difficulty that faces the movement is that there are so few women who have the training or time to be Guardians of the Camp Fire, and without a leader the Camp Fire is impossible. I believe it is worthy a place on the program of the high school. I would let the

girls have Friday afternoon of each week under their regular teachers for their camp fire. The training of the camp fire is the training that the country girl most needs. It is the sort of training that will help her to enjoy the open country on the one hand, and that will fit her to organize its home and community life on the other. Still it is hard to see how she can get it, at present at least. It would be very difficult indeed



A GROUP OF CAMP FIRE GIRLS FROM SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

to find women in the country who could take the time or who would be willing and able to be Guardians of the Camp Fire. At present most country girls do not attend school much after they are old enough to be Camp Fire Girls. However, the problem of the country village is almost identical with that of the farm, and the young people are often worse off from a surplus of idleness than the farm young people are from a surplus of work. The village is near to nature for the nature lore and hikes. The girls have the time, and

it should not be impossible to find the leadership that is required. The village is the best place there is for the organization of the order.

One is led to wonder, in going over the ritual, if it would not have been better to have restored the old-time ritual of puberty, with its initiation into the secrets and mysteries of the tribe — to make the Camp Fire, even more than it is at present, a training for marriage. This fact is borne in upon us by the fact that marriage and the bearing of children are usually the supreme facts in a woman's life, and that the schools are doing nothing whatever in most places and little anywhere to prepare a woman either for this relationship or for the trade of the housewife. In olden times the girls were pretty adequately trained in the home for this position, but this is no longer true. We should not expect a young man to get married until he had learned some trade or profession, so that he was capable of making a living and supporting a family. The woman has her trade to learn no less. She needs to know the housewifely arts, to be able to keep accounts and do the marketing, to care for children, and to make her home attractive. This is as much her work as medicine or agriculture is her husband's. In Europe a girl is supposed to have mastered these housewifely arts before her *début* in society, but here many of the girls enter upon matrimony absolutely unprepared for nearly all its duties. Already the Camp Fire Girls are receiving much of this training; only a little more is needed. The badge or uniform of the Torch Bearer ought to signify that this girl has mastered the arts that a woman should know and that she is eligible for marriage. If it were so understood, it would doubtless add to the popularity of the order. The Camp Fire manual can be obtained by writing to the headquarters, Grace Parker, Secretary, 118 East 28th Street, New York City.

SUMMARY

Many are sure to say by the time they have reached this point, if they persist so long, that this is all very well, but the country girl has much work to do, and she has not time for all these things that have been enumerated. I do not think this is so. All that I have mentioned and more can easily be done in one afternoon and two evenings a week, and



CAMP FIRE GIRLS LEARNING TO COOK OUT OF DOORS

every girl should have at least that much for her recreation and social life. To give her less will be to make life dull and tame, to crowd out of it most of the romance and adventure which can make it seem significant and which can give it breadth and color for later years. If the country cannot afford this much time for life, it cannot keep the young people on the farm. A large and satisfying life, not dollars, is the supreme need of each individual, and no amount of prosperity can compensate one for a life that is not worth living. Let

not the indulgent parent think that by working the girl twelve hours a day he can clothe her in silks and leave her an ample dower. A princess in rags is always better than a beggar in ermine. The best dower that any girl can bring to her life partner is health and wifely arts and a loving, joyous spirit. He who would choose millions in preference to these qualities is not worthy of a noble woman, because he shows by his choice that he cannot appreciate her. There is much of sordidness and meanness in life, of course ; but, despite it all, a dower of health and love and intelligence will ever bring more admirers that are worth while than a fine farm or a large inheritance. If we sacrifice the youth of our girls to the Moloch of profits, we surely sell the future for a pittance. Child labor on the farm is beyond the reach of the law, but it should not be beyond the reach of the farmer's conscience. He should realize that he has no right to rob the future home of his daughter and make her a slave instead of a princess, in order to save the washing bill or to avoid the cost of labor-saving devices in the house.

CHAPTER X

THE BOY SCOUTS THE SALVATION OF THE VILLAGE BOY

During the last four years the order of the Boy Scouts has been organized in every country in the civilized world. There are at present probably, in the various patrols, more than three million scouts, a number equal to the standing army of Russia. In this country the order is less than four years old, yet there are already five hundred thousand scouts, and a whole library of books devoted to scouting. Perhaps at no time before in the history of the world has a social movement taken so strong a hold on the public imagination. Whenever an idea spreads as this one has done, it must come as the satisfaction of a long-felt want. There is no explanation, unless there is some intimate relationship between its ideals and the natural ideals of adolescent boys.

SOURCES OF THE MOVEMENT

The honor of founding the order belongs to General Baden-Powell, the hero of Mafeking. He discovered that in times of peace, army life was very uninteresting to the men, and there were constant desertions. He sought to make it more interesting and hit upon scouting as the means. He had thought of it as a purely military expedient, but on his return from the war he was surprised to find that the manual that he had drawn up for his men had been adopted by several private schools in England. This led him to think that it might be well fitted for boys everywhere, and he was led

to revise and enlarge his manual. In doing this he got many suggestions from the Society of the Sons of Daniel Boone, which had been founded by Dan Beard several years before, and from the Woodcraft Indians which had been organized with similar purposes by Thompson Seton. The bands of the Woodcraft Indians already numbered one hundred thousand boys, and Seton was conducting a training class in New York for the leaders of these bands. Baden-Powell, himself, did not consider that we needed the Boy Scouts in this country because of these other organizations and the boys' department of the Y.M.C.A. The Macedonian call, "Come over and help us," which came to him while he was in the midst of his work of promotion in Canada, was a complete surprise to Powell.

On the organization of the Boy Scouts of America, the Sons of Daniel Boone and the Woodcraft Indians came in as a part of the new order; and Powell says that we have here in America the strongest organization of the Boy Scouts there is. The Boy Scouts is often criticized as a military organization; but the founder always insists that the work is to be "peace scouting" and must not be military in any sense. He says that the boys will sicken of the military drill, and while tactics are probably the easiest thing to give them, the boys will soon give up the practice. In this country we really have the Sons of Daniel Boone, the Woodcraft Indians, and the boys' department of the Y.M.C.A. in the dress of Powell's Scouts. Outside the uniform, the patrol organization, the name, and an occasional drill which is not encouraged, the Boy Scouts of America have nothing military about them. The order is trying to develop the sturdy virtues of the pioneer and the love of outdoor life rather than soldierly virtues or vices.

The manual is the sort of book that ought to be in the hands of every adolescent boy. It covers essentially the



BOY SCOUTS LEARNING THE SECRETS OF FIELD AND FOREST

virtues and accomplishments that are fundamental to youth. The scout must be familiar with nature ; he should recognize all the birds, animals, fish, and flowers. He should be able to follow a trail and to find his way in the wilderness, to camp

out and cook his own food. He should acquire the arts of the pioneer and the Indian. He is to avoid the wretched butchery of game that so often characterizes the city hunter, for "the scout does not kill animals or birds except for food." He must practice the self-reliance and hardihood of the wilderness. These are virtues that appeal to every boy. They are the best possible antidotes for the idleness and coddling of so many fond homes.

The boys' department of the Y.M.C.A. has added to the scouts the idea of chivalry, which has two fundamental concepts, that of honor and that of courtesy to women and the weak and aged. These are essentially adolescent virtues, most easily taught at this age. They add a sense of romance and dignity to the order. They also are essentially virile virtues of a crude but vigorous age. Some of us realize to our sorrow that a tradesman's word is not always as good as his bond, — that an assurance that a thing will be done falls short of a guaranty, — and the business world should welcome any sort of order that will create and promote this sense of honor. Young America has, as a rule, much of the outer show of gallantry toward women, but this does not always represent that respect, almost veneration, that chivalry was supposed to stand for. At its best, chivalry is probably the best safeguard we have against the social evil.

There are two chapters in the manual that come from the modern movement for health and athletics. These are excellent practical hints in caring for the health, and the games are a good series of outdoor games, such as any company of boys would play with pleasure. These are for the most part real scout games, which involve skill in woodcraft and scoutcraft.

FIRST AID AND LIFE-SAVING

Scouting promotes the heroic virtues and offers bronze, silver, and gold medals for deeds of heroism. Nothing could be more salutary than this promotion of courage. It invites the boy to run into danger, but only that he may rescue another. The order gives him its hero medal when he does it. Baden-Powell tells a story of a boy who saw a runaway team in the suburbs of London. He got into the wagon, climbed out on the wagon tongue, and knocked the horses' heads together until "he knocked some sense into them." He was given a medal for his bravery, and there followed a regular epidemic of stopping runaway horses. Recently I saw a horse running away down a crowded street. There was an eight- or nine-year-old boy in the carriage. The street contained a goodly number of automobiles and carriages and its usual quota of people on foot; but even the autos scurried to the gutter, and not a person lifted his hand. We evidently need some of this scout training. There have been a number of cases where scouts have saved people from drowning, and not a few where they have made rescues from fire. The first aid is more or less necessary to scouts, because their scouting often leads them about the wilderness, where they are by themselves. Injuries are likely to occur, and they will be helpless if they cannot render this assistance themselves.

PATRIOTISM

The scouts seek to inculcate patriotism through teaching respect for the flag, and the history of the United States. The scout pledges himself "to do his duty to God and his country."

THE SCOUT PATROL

Scouts are organized into patrols of eight boys. Each patrol has a leader and an assistant leader. The leader is generally an older boy. Three or more patrols constitute a troop, and a troop is in charge of a scout master, who must be an adult. Boys from twelve to eighteen years of age may become members of a patrol. The scout often wears a uniform of khaki and on his hikes carries a "billy" that resembles a knapsack. This organization of the patrol and the uniform suggest the military origin of the order, but there is little else that is military about it.

THE SCOUT OATH AND ORDERS

On becoming a scout the boy takes the following oath :

On my honor I will do my best :

1. To do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the scout law ;
2. To help other people at all times ;
3. To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The scout law may be summed up as the Ten Commandments, with several social virtues added.

There are three common orders of scouts. The first degree is that of a Tenderfoot, who must be able to pass the following requirements :

1. Know the scout law, sign, salute, and significance of the badge.
2. Know the composition and history of the national flag and the customary forms of respect due to it.
3. Tie four out of the following knots : square reef, sheet bend, bow-line, fisherman's, sheepshank, halter, clove hitch, timber hitch, or two half hitches.

In order to advance from this lowest order to become a second-class scout, he must gain proficiency in a number of outdoor arts, and he must have saved up and deposited at least one dollar. In order to become a first-class scout he must be proficient, in general, in the arts of woodcraft and campcraft, know first aid, have at least two dollars in the savings bank, and have enlisted a boy who has been trained by himself as a Tenderfoot. After a boy has become a first-class scout he may go on to become a life scout, a Star scout, and an Eagle scout by acquiring proficiency in a number of arts and industries, such as agriculture, blacksmithing, athletics, swimming, surveying, etc. For each of these he must take an examination and will receive a merit badge if he passes. The life scout must get five of these badges, the Star scout ten, and the Eagle scout twenty-one. In acquiring these merit badges it is not considered that the boy is really learning a trade, but he is learning to be handy along the lines of certain trades. He is getting the groundwork on which technical skill can be built later. It is almost necessary that the first steps be taken early if the boy is ever to be a master workman, and this training is a much-needed supplement to the work that the schools are giving.

POPULARITY OF THE BOY SCOUTS

Why have the Boy Scouts had their marvelous popularity? I do not suppose that ever before in the history of the world has an order been organized in all civilized countries in so short a time as has the Boy Scouts. The growth of the order seems greatly to strengthen the position of the theory known in education and anthropology as the recapitulation theory, which is that "the individual repeats the history of the race." In other words the child is a primitive man; he climbs up to civilization by much the same stages, has much the same

interests along the way, as had the race in its progress. The individual child is constantly conditioned in this progress by imitating the actions of a later period, by the advice and encouragement that is given him for different kinds of excellence. Yet his deepest interests are the same as were those of the race at his stage of development. The boy enters at puberty upon the period that is in general characterized by the tribal life. Its chief activities are hunting, fishing, fighting.



A TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS ON A HIKE

It is a wild, free life in an environment of nature. It is a time of courage, sometimes of cruelty, of physical hardihood, of close observation, and a simple strategy that is closely akin to the cunning of some of the higher animals. These are the fundamental interests of boys everywhere at this period of development. It is at this time that the boy first forms his gang, that he begins to play team games. He wants to hunt and fish, to camp out and sit around the fire. His reading is mostly tales of adventure. He admires above all other things independence and daring. These are essentially

the virtues that are promoted by the Boy Scouts, although it has aimed to substitute the interest of the naturalist for the love of the hunter, and it has introduced a number of moral precepts which do not psychologically belong to the adolescent period.

I am inclined to think that the order is at present suppressing too much the military ideal. For the soldier is one of the natural ideals of the adolescent boy. It has to contribute the ideals of obedience, neatness, and orderliness. It does not follow at all that the boy will be inclined to war when he grows up, because he has had military drill as a boy. In fact, I believe it is likely to have exactly the opposite effect upon him. The soldier's duty is always more attractive in prospect than it is in realization. Baden-Powell advises against frequent military drills, because he says that "it always makes the boys sick of it." If a boy has had his military craving satisfied in this way in his boyhood, he will not carry over an unsatisfied craving to later years, where it may cause trouble. The Boy Scouts are now organized in every country of the civilized world. In the near future we may look for international encampments and meetings. It is this knitting together of peoples across national boundaries, the meeting in conferences and conventions, that is one of the greatest safeguards against war, and the chances of a world peace are probably improved rather than lessened through the organization of the scouts.

As the scout virtues are essentially adolescent virtues, I cannot but wonder if twelve is not a year or two too young for a boy to be a scout. The ideals of the order seem to represent a period that usually begins about two years later, and while the little boy wants to imitate the big boy, it is not always a good thing to let him do it. Precocity is apt to lead to the feeble development of function. I do not think that the

boy who takes it up at twelve will ever find it quite as interesting as he would if he had waited until a year or two later. The older boys of sixteen or seventeen do not wish to associate with these boys of twelve, and it will almost surely detract from the good comradeship of the camp, which is one of its essential virtues. If a boy becomes a scout at fourteen and remains a member of the troop until he is eighteen, he is a scout for four years, which is long enough.

DIFFICULTY OF SECURING SCOUT MASTERS

If scouting represents and teaches the virtues of the chivalric age of adolescence, is it not a training which every boy should have? I believe it is. It is a more fundamental training in manliness, virtue, self-reliance, and efficiency than the boy is getting out of the school. It is certainly one of the best safeguards against the peculiar temptations and vices of puberty. It develops the good fellowship for which there is at that time such a craving, and which is apt to ripen into the friendships of a lifetime. Friendship creates most of the joy and ultimate values of life, but we are thus far doing almost nothing to create it. Here we are met with an obstacle which seems to be almost insuperable. There are very few men who have the necessary training for scout masters or who have the time or the inclination to render this important service. It is difficult to get the people to take courses of training to prepare them to render a service that will not be compensated. Hence I believe that the order can never come into its own until it becomes a part of the public school work and is required of all boys. It is already required in a number of private schools and, I understand, in all the public schools of Russia, where its military side will doubtless be emphasized. Why not dismiss the upper grades at noon on Friday and let the older girls have their camp fire and the boys have scouting?

This could not well be worked in the one-room rural school, and it would require nearly as many men teachers as women teachers in order to carry it out. But there are many new subjects, especially the industrial ones, and games and athletics that are also demanding more men teachers. Friday afternoon does not usually amount to much for school work. Its present value is not comparable to the value that might come from the practice of the arts of the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls. This would apply especially to the high-school age, and the high school is probably the place to try the experiment.

SHOULD BE A PART OF THE SCHOOL WORK

A number of things that scouting is teaching are the ones most fundamental to the welfare of the country — the love of nature and the open-air life, self-reliance, observation, coöperation, good fellowship. These are what the country needs. The rural community might even do well to exchange the education of the rural school for such a training. However, under existing circumstances a satisfactory organization of the scouts is practically impossible in the open country, because there are no scout masters available, because the boys of fourteen and over are too widely scattered about the community to get together easily, and because thus far the country has not found the time for the boys to have the meetings. Again, some social center is almost absolutely necessary if the scouts are to be organized in the country at present, unless they can be organized through the county Y.M.C.A. or through the Sunday school, because there is no other place where boys who have finished the elementary school meet together. As there are very few counties having the county Y.M.C.A., regular Sunday-school classes for boys with competent leaders, or social centers, it is safe to say that at present any satisfactory organization of the Boy Scouts is well-nigh impossible in the open country.

BOY SCOUTS FOR THE VILLAGE

It has been said, "God made the country, man made the town, but the Devil made the little country village." The country or suburban village is the most attractive place of residence in many ways that there is. The garden village seems to be the ideal toward which our housing and town-planning movements are tending. In the village one may have a house to himself. He may have a yard and a garden, and room and safety for the play of the little children. If he wishes to walk or drive, it is only a short distance to the open country. But for the children from about ten years of age to eighteen, the country village is probably the most dangerous place morally that there is. The children in the cities have their playgrounds and their clubs, libraries, museums, stores, and other places where they may go and find instruction and pleasure. The children on the farm have their duties which keep them busy and teach them the trade of farming ; but the village boy and girl miss both of these sources of education — the varied life of the city, which makes it a constant exposition of the arts and ways of civilization, and the training of work which comes to the boy on the farm. There is no other place where there is quite so much idleness among the children as there is in the rural village, and idleness is always dangerous. It is in periods of idleness that children learn to smoke cigarettes, to shoot craps, to tell the smutty stories, to hear the smutty stories, to plan most of the things that their parents do not wish them to do. A boy may play baseball with eight other boys all of whom belong in the reform school, and so long as he plays he will not suffer much harm ; but let him loaf around with these boys for half an hour and there is no telling how much harm may be done. A girl may play basket ball with four loose girls and be a perfectly good, virtuous girl through it all ;

but let her sit down and gossip with these girls for a half hour, and a whole life may not be sufficient to undo the harm.

The village is probably the best place that there is for the organization of the Boy Scouts, and it is also the place that needs them the most. The Boy Scouts is an outdoor order, that is teaching the arts and crafts and the virtues and the independence of the wilderness. It is difficult to do these things in the city. Very little of woodcraft or scoutcraft can be practiced there. The order cannot well be organized in the country on account of the amount of work and the lack of leadership, but all the conditions seem to be favorable to the organization in the village. The surrounding country is available for hikes. There are usually woods and lakes in the neighborhood for scouting and camping. There is an abundance of time, and there is usually in the village some young lawyer or doctor or clergyman who is not overburdened with duties and can take charge of the troop. I believe the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls are the solution of the child problem in the village for the older boys and girls, and with this organization the village will become the most attractive place in the world for everybody to live. Mr. James R. West, 200 Fifth Ave., New York City, is the Chief Scout Executive.

CHAPTER XI

RECREATION FOR THE FARM WIFE

It is commonly supposed that the play movement is solely for the children in the crowded sections of the great cities, yet to the student of recreation it is perfectly certain that the greatest need is not that of the children of the city slum, but rather of the women on the farms. The cases are very different in outward appearance, but not so much so in reality, for in both it is demand for life and time to do, for the joy of the doing, what the spirit craves, rather than under the spur of necessity to do the thing they must.

WORKING TOO MANY HOURS

The problem of the farm woman is threefold. She is working far too long hours, her work is monotonous and uninteresting, and she has almost no recreation or vacations. The need of the factory worker, and others who are toiling in the industrial treadmill of the present, is great, but the need of the farm wife is greater. The work of the factory may be uninteresting and monotonous, but it is not for more than ten hours a day or six days a week; the work of the farm kitchen is uninteresting, and it is never finished. The farmer is often working much too hard for his own good, for it is quite impossible to pursue the modern methods of agriculture and work twelve hours a day in a field or elsewhere; but the farmer's work is largely limited by the daylight and the endurance of his team. As his wife's work is in the house and she furnishes the horse power herself it has no such

limitations. I believe my own mother worked fourteen or fifteen hours a day on week days and probably seven hours a day on Sunday all her life. She did not work harder than the neighboring women and not nearly so hard as some of them, as she never cared for the garden, fed the pigs, or milked the cows. I believe that the farm women of the entire country, or of the North at least, are working more than seventy hours a week. The law forbids the *employment* of women for more than fifty-four hours a week in Massachusetts and a number of other states ; but a woman may work in her own home as long as she or her husband pleases.

CONDITIONS BREED DISCONTENT

Farm women have not largely realized how hard they were working until very lately ; yet one hears constant expressions of weariness from them, and if we may judge from the songs that are sung and the inscriptions that we find on country tombstones, the one idea of heaven that prevails is that it is a place of rest. What shall we say of a time and a condition which develop an idea of heaven which has no positive content, but merely the ideal of the absence of toil ? There is surely something wrong in this life somewhere. It is hard to say how much the desire of the farmer's wife to escape from the drudgery of the farm is responsible for the alarming growth of absentee landlordism all over the country at present, but it is doubtless a considerable element in it. The boys and girls are leaving the farm. It must be that somewhere they have got the idea that it is not the best place in the world to live. This is often laid to a city-planned school system, but we cannot suppose that if the home breathed the spirit of satisfaction with conditions, the occasional influence of any city-bred teacher or curriculum could counteract it. Those of us who have had much experience with the rural school do

not dream that it is thus effective in other things, at least in molding the lives of the children. It doubtless has some influence, but even what influence it has is largely due to the fact that it finds a mind that is susceptible to such a suggestion. Where country women have been questioned, it has generally been found that they did not wish their daughters to be farmers' wives. The farm girls themselves in their abstract choice do not wish to marry farmers, and the reason that is given is the endless drudgery of the farm home.

This is a problem to which the schools of domestic economy, the agricultural colleges, the high schools, and the farmers themselves should devote their best efforts. It is fundamental to the welfare of the home and the whole farming community, because the home has to fill the place of general society and overcome the isolation of the farm. The children cannot be properly taught and cared for if the farm wife is spending twelve or fourteen hours a day on her housework. It would be futile for any one to hope to solve this problem offhand, but the following facts seem to be reasonably plain. They demand immediate attention.

NEED OF LABOR-SAVING DEVICES

Since the women are working far too long hours, every sort of labor-saving device should be acquired until their hours of labor are brought down to a reasonable total. It is notorious that this has not been done thus far. Every new year has brought new machinery and labor-saving devices to the farm, but there has been almost no change in the home. This is not from unkindness or selfishness on the part of the farmer, as a rule, but because he has not realized the situation. If the farmer can afford to have a mowing machine for himself, he can generally afford to have a windmill or a motor to pump the water for his wife.

The first great need is that the house should be planned not for show but to economize women's steps. The national Department of Agriculture and some of the agricultural colleges have designs for such homes that can be secured without cost.

If the farmer can afford to take his milk to the creamery, he can afford to take the family wash and perhaps the baking along and have it done at the same time. The editor of *Farm and Fireside* was speaking in a western farmers' institute and urging that the community arrange to have its washing done in this way, saying that it would not cost more than ten cents more to have the family wash done with a steam washing machine and mangle. A well-to-do farmer spoke up and said, "But what would my wife do if she didn't save that ten cents?" When asked how many children he had he said "Nine." We will hope that this farmer was an exception. It is always wasteful to do with human muscles what can be done by machines. Any farmer ought to be ashamed to have a wife whose time is not worth more than ten or twenty cents a day to her family.

The milk is coming to be pretty generally cared for by the farmer, as it should be. If he has not provided a windmill, he should also draw the water.

GREATER EFFICIENCY IN WORK

Perhaps the greatest trouble in this whole situation is that women have never learned the value of time. Their work has no money value put upon it; as a rule they have nothing to look forward to if their work is quickly done, and consequently the girls often dawdle along over it, taking two or three times as long as they should. The country girls who have worked for us have always done so. When one notices the celerity and industrial efficiency of the girls who are doing

piece work in the factory, and compares it with the listless movements of the girls working about the house, he is almost tempted to believe that he is beholding a different species or type of humankind. Yet these same farm girls make the very most effective factory workers when they go there. The trouble is that they have not been taught to be efficient and economize motions. The efficiency movement which would eliminate unnecessary steps and processes and do each task with a minimum of effort probably has a wider application in housework than it has anywhere else.

If the farm wife is given a convenient house, with running water, and her laundry and baking are done out, and she will study efficiency and celerity in doing her work, she can easily reduce her hours of labor to five or six, which is quite as much as any woman with children should be expected to give to her house. Eight hours a day is the legal working day on government contracts and in many states. If a woman works seven hours a day for seven days a week, she will still be working forty-nine hours a week. It is generally estimated that the child learns more in the first six years of his life than he does in all the years that come afterwards. The mother is almost the only teacher during this period, and to sacrifice her leisure is to sacrifice the future of the child.

WORK UNINTERESTING

The second difficulty with the work of the farm mother is the nature of the work itself. The farmer's work is out of doors, where he gets the fresh air, hears the songs of the birds, and sees the distant landscape and the ever-changing panorama of the seasons. His eyes are often closed to the beauty and the wonder of it all, but in some way it affects him unconsciously; he cannot entirely shut it out. The woman's work is indoors. With her long hours she might

almost as well be in the city, so far as any contact with birds or sunsets or an outdoor life is concerned.

The farmer's work changes from day to day. Each season has its special crops and harvests, its special forms of tillage, and its own problems. There is not the same change in woman's work. The beds have to be made, the floors swept, the meals cooked, and the dishes wiped every day of the year, summer or winter.

The farmer realizes the prospective profits as he tills the soil. He can measure his work by direct returns. He realizes that the work of to-day will not need to be done to-morrow, and that each day brings him nearer the end of the season and the reward of his labor. The woman does not have these sources of satisfaction. Her work is like that of a man who would make a pile of stones on one side of the road to-day and then carry them across and pile them up on the other side the next day, and so on *ad infinitum*. The work she does to-day she will do again to-morrow, and so on to the end of the chapter. There is no direct reward for her work. It is unproductive. It largely disappears down the throats of the family and seems to yield no returns.

The processes of agriculture have almost entirely changed in the last three or four decades until the farmer must be a high-grade mechanic, business man, and scientist to perform his work successfully. All of these processes are interesting in themselves. It is doubtful if washing dishes can ever be interesting in the same way. If the work is uninteresting, the hours must be made proportionately short, for the life of the spirit, the only life that is worth living, must come outside the work.

There are, however, parts of women's work that may be made much more interesting than they are at present. Cooking, canning, and preserving are interesting in themselves,

have some changes with the seasons, and may be made much more interesting by the application of scientific principles to them. The girls' cooking and canning clubs, which have recently been organized in a number of states, will, I believe, do an immense amount to make woman's work more attractive.

INTEREST IN CHILDREN

However, the fact remains that the most interesting thing about the home must always be the children and the family life. The service that has been required in the past cannot be compensated without abundant appreciation. It seems almost an axiom that the training that the farm girls most need is a training in the care and love of children. It is in playing with the children that she gets nearly all her recreation, for, merely as play, it is much better sport to dress a real live baby than it is to care for a doll. It is the children who give a motive to the work she does and who occupy her thoughts while she is busy with brainless tasks. It is their future that is to compensate for the monotony and drudgery of her daily life.

THE FAMILY LIFE

The farm woman is more dependent socially on the family than any other woman. She is almost completely isolated from outside society. She has no vacations, as a rule, and travels very little if any. It is in the family that she must find her real life. Even the farmer's contact with the world is wide beside hers. For the sake of the children and the wife alike the evenings should not be counted the unproductive period and eliminated as nearly as possible by early retiring and early rising and evening duties, which prevent the wife from being a companion. The farmer should not forget to bring home his bit of news, whatever it may be, and share it with the others. The farm woman should endeavor

to plan her work so that she can spend her evenings as far as possible with her family, and she should have something to bring to them. If she can play or sing, this will add much to the pleasure of the evenings. She should know how to play several games, both for her sake and the sake of the family. She should be able to tell stories or to read aloud at times. From some source her mind must be replenished, so that she will have something to talk about that is worth while. The farm home has been the moral strength of the farm and the country. If the farm wife is not overworked, she should be able to make the farm home yet more attractive by developing a more intimate and interesting life about the fireside at night. The wife must inevitably be the real entertainer in this home social center ; she must plan and provide for the things to be done. If this is well done, there will not be many cases of boys and girls going wrong or wanting to leave the farm as soon as possible. It seems a sad reflection on our civilization that we should have thought of washing the dishes as woman's work but should have regarded this ministration to the spirit of the home and the family, which is surely the wife's most vital function, as a mere extra, which she was under no obligation, either social or moral, to perform. This is so obviously putting the lesser before the greater, the body above the spirit, industry above life, that it perhaps gives some point to foreign criticisms of our materialistic view of human values. It is a sad criticism on our education that we are teaching the girls all about cube root and compound proportion and nothing about the care of children and making the home attractive. The young people are not staying at home in the evenings either in the country or in the city. Why? Because there is nothing going on in the homes, and because the girls are not taught as they should be how to make the home attractive or to develop its social life.

READING

If the farm wife is to make an attractive home, if she is to be able to take part in the conversation and to organize the social life of the family, she must have access to a woman's magazine and books. She cannot read aloud or tell stories to the family unless she has something to read from. Some arrangement should be made so that books will be readily available in the country, either through the school or through the traveling library. They have an excellent arrangement in Missouri and I know not how many other states, that fits well into rural conditions. The state librarian purchases the books. The books are sent out in strong boxes holding fifty. Any seven people can on application receive a box of these books and keep it for three or six months. This makes possible the placing of a usable library of sorted books in every neighborhood. All that the local group need to pay is the freight, which is a mere trifle. It is really a much cheaper and more effective way of providing books to the people than the city library, as it saves the cost of the building and the librarian. It puts into the community a small selection of really suitable books and avoids the confusion and helplessness that an inexperienced reader is apt to feel in the presence of the vast cases of card indexes of a city library. Why should not every state have this or a similar system? Novels, and books of travel, biography, and history, are needed for recreation; books on farming, domestic economy, and hygiene, for daily instruction and use; and a few good books of poetry for inspiration.

THE SOCIAL CENTER

The farm woman is isolated, more so than her husband, who is overmuch by himself. It is essential to her welfare that at least one day or evening of the week she should meet

for social purposes with the other people of the community. Otherwise she will not have enough to talk about in the evenings or enough to think about at her work. I see no possibility of satisfying her social needs in most cases without the social center, unless she goes each week to a social meeting at the grange or the church, and it is to be feared that even here the social opportunities are more limited than they should be. The social-center movement has often been thought of as a city movement, but it is surely more needed in the country than it is in the city.

NEED OF A VACATION

A very large part of the recreation of the farm woman must come, as we have indicated, from the home life and the social center, but this should not be all. She needs a vacation, with a complete change of scene and thoughts, for two or three weeks every year. This probably is not possible, however, in most cases, and she must get her vacation as she goes along. It should be of such a character that it will give her something pleasant to think about while she is washing the dishes and making the beds. If these times that require little thought in themselves may be periods when thought is being incubated and policies determined, they need not be lost to spiritual growth on account of their lack of mental content.

SHOULD PLAY GAMES

The farm woman should play certain games in the yard. It would cause astonishment, I suppose, in many quarters to see the farmer and his wife out playing tennis after supper in the fall and the spring of the year, but I know of few things that would mean more for the common welfare.

SHOULD DRIVE AND WALK

But in general recreation for the farm woman will be pretty dependent upon her ability to get about. Every girl ought to learn to harness a horse, to ride horseback, and to drive, in order that she may be independent and go where and when she wishes. This means, of course, that a horse should be put at her disposal when she cares to go. At least one afternoon a week a horse should be understood to belong to her. This should be possible in most families at nearly all times of the year, but in order that the privilege or opportunity of going may be assured, she should be able to walk as well. During the fall I usually walk from three to ten miles through the country two or three afternoons each week, but I seldom meet a woman walking along the roads.

SHOULD BELONG TO A SOCIAL CLUB

Every farm woman should belong to some club or social organization that would give her frequent opportunities to meet with her friends. It would be a good thing if this could be a club to which both town and country women belong. The experience of the country women is too uniform for it to be really stimulating. In the city any group is made up of representatives from many different trades and professions. But in the country gatherings, as a rule, agriculture alone is represented.

AN ALUMNÆ ASSOCIATION OF A DISTRICT SCHOOL

There is among the women in the farming community in which I was brought up a club that is worthy of being copied, because it is successful; and it seems likely that it would be successful elsewhere. It is the Fordham School Alumnae Association.

In an American community those who attended the same school as children are soon scattered into adjoining towns and counties, and some of them into distant states. The majority of them probably live within an area where it is possible for them to get together by train or carriage, but far enough apart so that they do not see each other often. There are no other memories that are quite so fondly remembered in adult life as the memories of childhood. This club appeals to real interests that are much more vital than those of the sewing circle. This club is known as the Fordham Club, from the Fordham School, which the members attended, for the most part about forty years ago, though some of the younger generation have been admitted also. They are now scattered over the north and west of the country, though a majority of them are living within a radius of twenty miles. Not more than three or four are still residents of the school district. The meetings are held at the houses of the members and sometimes require a trip by train of twenty or thirty miles. There are monthly sessions, which convene about eleven and adjourn at four. The numbers in attendance vary from ten to forty. The hostess serves dinner.

At the meetings the talk drifts largely to old times and reminiscences. The one event which is always scheduled is the reading of letters from absentees. The following will serve as a good example of letters of this kind and also of the talk. Such letters not infrequently come from Washington, California, and other states of the far West.

I wonder how many of you girls remember the "sparking bench," as we used to call the back seat; and how the older ones would pair off in couples and throw a shawl over their heads that they might be more retired. And how we would go to the woods after leeks; and the teacher would be "so mad"—obliged to work among us and get the full benefit of the perfume. And do you remember how you, Nell, Cora, Carrie and myself, and occasionally some of the others, would go at noon

to some one of the many pleasant orchards, spread out our dinners and have a picnic? and how we all loved to get something that Cora's mother had made — her cooking was always so good?

And then another treat was to go over to the old mill and eat some of old Mr. Mattison's sorghum molasses or apple jelly. One time I went to the Mattison home to an afternoon warm sugar social, soon after Gene and Deal were married; and she cried so because Gene played "snap-and-catch-'em" and kissed the girls. And what happy times we spent on the ice in the winter time!

There are many happy remembrances, too, of the Sunday School, and of Messrs. Parsons and Loba and dear old Mrs. Nettleton. One time she brought a double-buggy load of you girls to our house to spend the day. Mother got up a big dinner for us and we spent the afternoon under those great oak trees in the woods that were there in front of our place. We made a Christmas tree of a growing thorn bush. I cannot remember who was there, but doubtless some of you will recall the circumstance.

Well, I must not take up too much time and will hasten on. Most all of those dear old mothers have left us now, girls; and we are growing old ourselves. Some of us are far away; some lives have run in pleasant, happy grooves, for the most part; and some of us have known bitter sorrow and unutterable suffering; some have crossed the great divide and are waiting on the other side, where I hope we shall all be together again some day, an unbroken band of Fordhamites.

I am glad you are having these meetings; and wishing you many happy returns of the day, I am glad to be one of you, though not present.

The proceedings of the club are written up in full in the local paper, from which this letter is taken. The editor says that a number of people have written from away and subscribed for the paper, because they wanted to get an account of the affairs of the club.

Once a year the families of the members are invited, and at some time during the summer the annual picnic and homecoming of all the old members of the school district is held. This past summer the meeting was in the grove of a lake near here. There were one hundred twenty-five in

attendance, and every one voted that it was a most enjoyable occasion. The advantages of this school district are in no way peculiar. The members are as much scattered as is usually the case. The club is carried on without any special promotion or dues. The railroad connections are not good, as there is only one railroad that touches the township, and this has only a few local trains that stop. There is no interurban trolley line within twelve miles. Some of the women drive ten to twenty miles to attend. None of the members are rich or even well-to-do in the liberal sense of the word. It would seem that a club that can succeed under such circumstances could succeed almost anywhere. About all that is needed is for some one to take the initiative in its organization. If there was ever a strong friendship between the girls of the old school, the club will probably be self-perpetuating.

MEANING OF THE COUNTRY-LIFE MOVEMENT

The Country-Life Movement, which is upon us, means essentially that life is more than profits and may not be sacrificed to an endless routine, which gives no time to live, or to a sordid ambition, which in an utter devotion to money-making forgets that money has value only in so far as it secures for us a large and satisfying life. But a wealth that has to be hoarded and watched and tended, so that there is no time or thought for the pleasures or aspirations of life, means ever a poverty of spirit. The farmer must be given position and influence in society and in the affairs of the nation. The country must be made attractive enough so that it can keep the boys and girls on the farm, so that the more capable and efficient rather than the less capable and efficient farmers will remain. If this movement for a larger life is to prevail, it must come largely through the development of the social life in the open country, and of the social life of

the home. In this work the farm woman is the natural leader, and the times demand that she shall be emancipated so far as possible from the drudgery of the kitchen and the washtub, in order that she may give herself to her children, her family, and the community; and they demand no less that the daughter that is coming on to take her place shall have instruction in the things that are vital to her welfare and the welfare of the community — in the care of the home and the organization of its social life, in the love of nature, and in the love and care of children.

CHAPTER XII

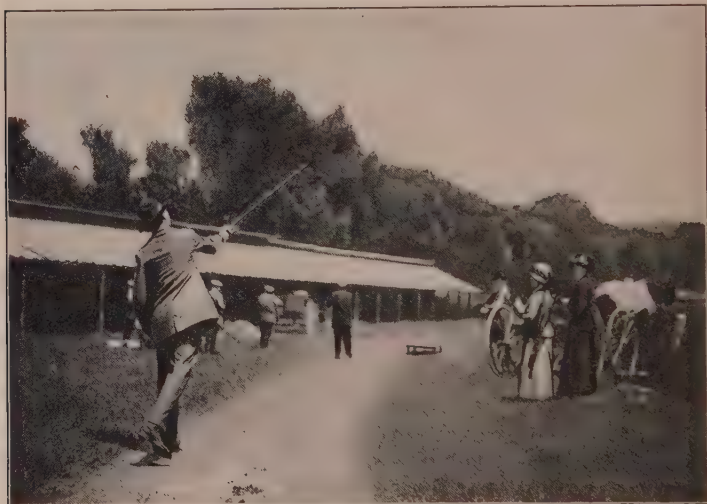
RECREATION FOR THE FARMER

The country is the most attractive place in the world to live. The American farmer has been given the greatest opportunity that has ever come to any great class in all the ages to lead a satisfying life. But most of this great opportunity is being wasted, because he does not appreciate the forces by which he is surrounded or enjoy the work that is given him to do. Placed in the garden "to keep and to tend it," as were our first parents, he refuses to see the wonder and beauty of it all, although it is no less a Garden of Eden than it was then. To him no less than of old the God of nature speaks in a thousand ways; yet his ears are stopped and he does not hear the voices. A warder in the great gallery of nature, where the eternal Artist hangs each day a new masterpiece, he scarce looks up to see what the picture may be. Placed in a great divine world, where eternal forces are working perennial miracles, he often sees only a little world of crops and prices, and looks out upon it without reverence or wonder. The results are apparent. Forty-three per cent of our American farms are now owned by absentee landlords. The boys and girls are leaving for the city. The country is not attractive to the people of the farm.

ABSENTEE FARMERS

This condition is serious for all concerned. The man who works for long at a task which he does not enjoy degenerates in it. Dissatisfaction and discontent make the spirit mean.

The farmer who does not understand and appreciate the forces and laws by which he is surrounded does not grow at his work. His development stops as soon as it begins. His work is a parasite upon his spirit as long as he continues it. The farmers who are going to town are largely middle-aged men, with their best days before them. In general it would be better for the community if they committed suicide at this



A BAIT-CASTING CONTEST

time. Rented farms do not yield, in most sections of the country, a revenue of more than three or four per cent on their value. The proceeds of a ten-thousand-dollar farm are not sufficient to support a family in a town or city, or even half support them, according to American standards. These retired farmers have to economize; they are not familiar with city problems and are often a very serious menace to the general good, because they object to all improvements that require the expenditure of money. They are also a very

serious menace to the welfare of the country community from which they have come ; as they no longer live there, they are unwilling to support the rural school ; they want a cheap building and a cheap teacher ; they no longer support the country church ; and they are not interested in good roads. The farmer has nothing to do in the town, and he is discontented and unhappy there. His life is shortened by the lack of legitimate interests, and his productive capacity is lost to the community. The tenant takes the farm for a short term. He wishes to get as much out of it as possible in that time. In general he is less intelligent than the owner, and he is not interested in the permanent fertility of the land or value of the property. He lets the fences and buildings run down. He does not care to support good schools or roads or churches, because he is a floater. Perhaps the greatest loss is that in this way the community loses the leadership in rural affairs which these retired farmers might exercise if they still lived on their farms. Such leadership is the greatest need of the countryside.

Farmers who move to town are apt to do so for the sake of their children. Yet the country village is probably the worst place in the world for them. They do not get the education that comes from farm work ; they do not get the education that comes from the varied activities of a great city, which make it a perpetual exposition of all that the world is doing. Most of the vices of children are the vices of idleness, and there is no other place where children are quite so idle, and where their occupations are so purposeless, as they are in the rural village.

The exodus of the young men and women from the farm is no less serious for the farming community, because it is mostly the able and capable ones who are going, leaving the less capable ones behind. The progressive selection of the

less capable for the farm can only mean the decay of farm life and the loss of position and influence by the farmer. The young people who go to the city are probably as a whole not as well off there. Their inexperience makes them easy victims of sharpers, and their social isolation is apt to lead to the sowing of many wild oats. The country boy and girl in town are one of the most serious problems of the city.

Surely one of the gravest questions for the agricultural colleges and rural economists to answer is how to stay this cityward tide. As the migration from the farm has seemed to increase with prosperity, and it is the most prosperous ones that have gone, we cannot think that the chief reasons for it can be industrial, but that in some way the life of the country has not been attractive. There seem to me two large reasons for this: first, the lack of social and recreational opportunities in the country; and, second, the failure of the farmer to enjoy the work of the farm itself. The farmer has not found in his work in any sense its own reward, but has sought for returns wholly in terms of profits.

MUST ENJOY LIFE AS HE GOES ALONG

Why does not the farmer enjoy his work? The first reason which must be reasonably evident to every one is that he is working too long hours. Any work becomes drudgery when it leads to weariness and denies any free time for enjoyment of leisure. Such work makes slaves of men and can no more be rewarded by a financial return than can slavery or prostitution itself. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life?" The only advantage that a man gets out of wealth who spends all his time acquiring it is the sense of possession, the dignity that he feels and that others accord to him because of what he has gained. Wealth, so acquired, is nearly always a curse to the children and often

to the community as well. Life must be enjoyed as we go along. If for a long term of years we devote all our energies to making money, we soon lose the capacity for any other form of enjoyment. The farmer or other worker who has spent his prime thus is apt to come to a realization in the end that it is not worth while, that his life is going by without being lived, and he thinks the solution of the situation is to retire and enjoy himself. No one can play all the time



GAMES AT A DUNSTED STREET RAILROAD PARK, BUTTE, MONTANA

and find it play. In time it palls upon the appetite. This comes sooner or later to all, but it comes very soon to one like the farmer, who has never learned how to play. How much better it would have been if he had taken his enjoyment as he went along, and developed his capacity for the use of leisure as he approached old age. In this way he might have enjoyed his work from day to day instead of finding it drudgery, have developed in mental stature, have kept his children on the farm, and, in the long run, have been much

more successful financially; for it is quite impossible for a man to be a twentieth-century farmer or to use modern methods in agriculture and work twelve or fourteen hours a day. More and more the farmer must be a manager, a business man, a scientist, and a mechanic. Because of his interest in the result the farmer may not himself notice the strain of the long hours, but his son and daughter and the hired man surely will. Not only does the farmer need shorter hours each day, but he needs a half holiday each week. The education of the farm comes largely from the opportunity which it gives to think out problems, but this means that the farmer must have something to think about. It is almost absolutely necessary that he should replenish his mind at frequent intervals with facts and experiences to work over.

LOVE OF NATURE

The love of nature is one of the most fundamental elements in the enjoyment of country life; the reverence for it will give dignity and worth of character as few other things can. Yet farmers as a class are indifferent to sunsets and autumn leaves and the hundred changes of the seasons, which give the country its eternal charm. He who sees in a field of waving grain only so many bushels of wheat is losing the best part of his harvest. He will do his milking quite as well if, as he goes with his pail, he still perceives the beauty of the flowers, the freshness of the grass, the songs of the birds, and the changing colors of the dawn.

LOVE OF ANIMALS

I know a gentleman of eighty-two, in comfortable circumstances, who still lives on the farm, despite the protests of his children, because of his fondness for the pigs and chickens and cows and horses by which he is surrounded. He is wont

to talk to them as he goes about among them, and gets much of his society in this way. So do all farmers. The farmer who finds no company in his team or his cows will soon leave the farm from utter loneliness. The company of animals must largely supply the missing human society. There is no difficulty in making the children fond of animals. All that is needed is to give them some to care for during their early years, and nature will do the rest. We always come to love that which is dependent upon us, especially if it is our own. The farmer ought to give his son a pig or lamb or calf occasionally, because he thus gains a sense of the value of property and acquires a new dignity in his own eyes as a property holder; he learns much about the animal by caring for it, and, best of all, he comes to love it, which is an important moral training in itself and helps to make farm life more pleasant and less lonesome.

THE FARMER AS A SCIENTIST

The farmer needs to understand his world and appreciate its laws. He cannot go on doing things by rule of thumb because his father did that way and have any large enjoyment of his work; but if he sees the principles that lie behind the rotation of crops, fertilization, and breeding, every crop becomes a scientific experiment, as interesting as those of the laboratory. With a knowledge of plants and insects he no longer need look to a blind fate or the changes of the moon for results, but becomes a molder of the forces with which he works. Our rural schools, again, have done almost nothing in the past to give to the farm children the knowledge which they need in order that they may be intelligent workers on the farm. But a better day is coming, with agriculture in our rural elementary schools and rural high schools, with our boys' corn clubs and our girls' canning clubs, with

the winter courses in the agricultural colleges, farmers' institutes, and the like. This work should be greatly extended. Trade schools have become very nearly universal abroad, and we have a good beginning in Massachusetts and some other eastern states. Many of the trades that are being trained for are already overcrowded, and there is scant time to give the training. On the other hand, all the farm boys and girls have plenty of time during the winter for a short course in agriculture. Such winter courses should be started in every township as fast as the teachers can be trained to take charge. Very likely some of the more progressive farmers of mature years would also be led to attend these schools. This work is more necessary in agriculture than in any other trade or profession, in as much as practice is probably farther behind our knowledge in agriculture than it is in any other subject. It is a series of such schools and coöperation that have produced the unparalleled prosperity of Denmark despite every kind of adverse condition. A sandy peninsula nearly surrounded by the frigid waters of two oceans, where they have to blanket the cows in August to protect them from the cold wind, it has prospered as no other agricultural country has done. It is hard to conjecture what the American farm might yield, with our improved machinery, rich soil, and mild climate, under similar methods of agriculture. I believe the annual products of the state of Michigan might be increased a hundred millions in value by the introduction of such a system of schools.

THE FARMER AS A MECHANIC

During the last three or four decades the work of the farm has been almost entirely transformed. Thirty years ago the farmer held the handles of his plow in a single furrow. He harrowed the furrows with a drag which he followed. He planted the corn with a hoe or a hand planter, cultivated it

with a walking cultivator, and cut it up and husked it by hand. To-day the land is largely plowed with a gang plow, or at any rate by a riding plow, and harrowed with a riding harrow; the corn is planted by a machine planter, cut up, if cut up at all, by a corn reaper, and husked by a machine husker. The person who does not understand machinery or enjoy the operation of machines will be increasingly unsuited for the life of a farmer. The ingenious person always enjoys machinery and the taking it apart and putting it together. The person without mechanical training or ability always finds it a bore. It always goes wrong, gets out of order just at the critical moment, and, in general, exhibits a total depravity which is as nearly complete as anything we know. All children like to watch machinery and take it to pieces. It does not take much encouragement to make almost any child ingenious with tools. As the farmer is becoming increasingly a mechanic, so his enjoyment of farm life is going to depend increasingly on his mechanical skill and the pleasure which he has in operating machines. The school must give him the training.

THE FAMILY LIFE

The family life is more intimate on the farm than elsewhere, since all of the members are working together in a common cause. Each understands the work which is being done, and each coöperates with the others to secure results. This is not true of most other trades and professions. The work of the lawyer and business man is almost absolutely apart from his family. The factory employee may not even bring his children in to see what he is doing. The result is that the family has few points of contact and sympathy. There are also many diversions that separate them at night. In the country the family work together and generally spend their evenings together. If the members manage to coöperate

and to spend the evenings pleasantly, this will do very much to make the farm home and farm life attractive. The city home has been very nearly destroyed by the hundred influences that are separating the family, but this is not yet true in the country. If the farmer will only appreciate that it is quite as much his work to raise a worthy family of children as it is to raise good pigs or corn, and will think of these evenings as no less important a part of the day than the daylight hours, then we may expect that the country will be the best place in the world to raise children at any rate, and that the city migration will ultimately be stayed. The farm home is the greatest asset of our American democracy. It has produced many of our greatest men and given stability to our national character.

THE CHILDREN

After all, it is the enjoyment of children and their play and their fresh points of view that gives most of the recreation to adults everywhere. It is hard to tell how much of the joy and hopefulness of life we should lose if our lives were not constantly refreshed by the gladness and hopefulness of children. Perhaps there is no other one thing that would do so much for the home, the parents, and the children as to develop an appreciation of the fact that playing with their children is one of the most sacred duties that are laid upon parents; that a crop of children is not less important than a crop of corn; and that they are worthy of quite as much care. No parent can ever be so good a counselor or understand his child so well if he does not play with him.

THE AGED

The aged come again into the position of children in the community. After the working days are over, there is plenty of time to play. If retirement comes while they are still

vigorous, it is then that many get the time to travel and do the things that they had wished to do but had not had time for before. It is the time when one drops his occupation and takes up his avocation. When this time comes to the farmer, he usually buys a little cottage in the neighboring village and moves to town. The natural recreation of old people comes largely from watching the progress of their children and playing with their grandchildren, from gossip and sociability and the deference of the community to a successful and useful life. There ought to be a pioneer's club in every community, where these old people could get together occasionally and tell yarns as the soldiers do at their reunions. Besides this they need plenty to read, of an entertaining nature, a horse to drive, a few chickens or a pig, and pleasant neighbors.

CHAPTER XIII

COUNTRY PLAYGROUNDS

Vacations are valuable to give variety to life, to throw off worry, to relieve the strain of overwork, and to bring in new points of view. Although the farmer and his wife need a vacation as much as any other single class, it is difficult for them to get one on account of the stock and duties that never cease. Nearly all pleasure resorts are located outside the cities, where the charm of natural scenery and the touch with natural things are the chief attraction. Through countless ages the ancestors of man have lived in an environment of nature. It has been for only a brief period of human history that he has inhabited cities. He goes back to nature, the woods, the waters, and the mountains as to his original home and there finds peace. The voice of the ocean, of the winds, of the rushing river, of the bird in the tree tops, speak cheer and calm to the spirit, where the whirl of wheels, the rumble of cars, the infinite noises of the city, are a constant source of irritation and nervous exhaustion. Although the farmer is placed where the city man would go for rest and recreation, the country is far from being a pleasure resort to him.

It does not seem likely that the farmer will ever make a practice of going away on vacations. The form of vacation that is really the most available is camping, but he has not thus far camped much, though the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the County Y.M.C.A., and the County Y.W.C.A. are doing much to make camping more popular than it has ever been before.

THE LAKESIDE RESORT

The pleasure resort that is best suited to the farmer is the one where he can go to picnic or to spend a day or two when he has the time. Lakeside resorts are now becoming common throughout the northern section of this country. At some of these there are whole colonies of summer people from the farms and country villages. As these resorts develop in the more thickly settled sections they acquire hotels, summer theaters, bath houses, and the ubiquitous pop-corn and lemonade counter. There are boats for rowing and fishing, a picnic grove (generally provided with tables), a water toboggan slide, and oftentimes a place for baseball and sometimes croquet. An increasing number of people are coming out from the small towns and villages to spend their summers, or a part of them, at these resorts. On Saturday afternoons and Sundays large numbers often congregate, and there are farmers' picnics and other festive occasions which bring out nearly every one. These lakeside places have grown up in response to a popular demand and are filling a real need, but it would not be difficult to point out their many limitations. The fishing has become unsatisfactory in most, the mosquitoes are often a pest, the facilities for games and play are inadequate, and the temptations are many. Country people are independent; they are unwilling to be regulated and do not believe much in regulation. Such resorts cannot be trusted to run themselves. They offer the opportunity for unrestricted drinking or dancing under the worst conditions, and for general immorality, as they are apt to attract dissolute women from the cities during the summer. If there were some one at these resorts to start water sports and tournaments in baseball, volley ball, and tennis, and if the county might issue licenses, making definite requirements in regard to hotels, dances, and drinking, it would be a great help.

THE PICNIC GROVE, OR TOWNSHIP PARK

The picnic is almost the only form of community recreation in most sections of the country. The grove is nearly always private property and is usually without improvements except tables. It should be a public institution and its resources developed. In order for it to reach the people there should be one in each township, and often it should be around the consolidated rural school. However, the rural school will probably not have water or trees, and if the picnic grove is to be there, it will often have to do without water and wait for the trees to grow. It would be more practical, in general, to purchase a picnic grove, or township park, outright, lay out athletic fields, and equip it as it should be. This grove might well be used for the summer meetings of the Chautauqua, the grange, and the social center. If the country people would develop the custom of resorting there on Saturday afternoons during the warmer months, such a grove would be an admirable playground for the county. President Bailey says, "The half holiday is coming for the farmer and coming fast." With the half holiday and the social center in winter and the picnic grove in summer, and some capable person to organize the recreation and social life, the country should be able to hold its own against the attractions of the city.

After the ground has been secured, it should be equipped permanently with all that could promote the recreation of a rural community. It should have a pavilion for shelter and speaking, there should be boating and swimming if there is water, and there should be fields for every sort of game and athletic event. Such facilities are expensive in the city on account of the cost of land, but are furnished nevertheless. The cost would be scarcely one per cent as much for the township, and nearly every township could well afford it. It would

be to the advantage of rural villages to provide such an equipment and so call in the people of the countryside, but thus far they have not done so. Perhaps they would if there were anything available and they saw that the voters were contemplating purchasing land elsewhere. At this township park there should be swings, sand bins, and slides for the little children, courts for tennis, croquet, volley ball, basket ball, and indoor-baseball diamonds for the girls and older people. There should be quoits and a rifle range for the older men and indoor and regular baseball for the young men. Here should be held on Saturday afternoons the township tournaments in volley ball and indoor and regular baseball. Such a picnic grove, or township park, is the natural playground of the country. It is no less needed than is the playground in the most congested city, though it is needed for exactly the opposite reason. The playground is needed in the city on account of congestion. The playground is needed in the country on account of isolation.

DIRECTED PLAY IN SMALL VILLAGES

It must not be taken for granted, however, that a playground of the city type is impossible in rural communities. I have recently spent a day in the small village of North Stonington, Connecticut. It is a place of some one hundred fifty inhabitants and has maintained for the last three years a playground with two regular playground directors. The children are coming in from two miles in the country to attend. This has been organized through the enterprise of the pastor of the Congregational church, the Reverend Frederick Hollister. The ground is located in an orchard just back of the parsonage. There are swings, sand bins, seesaws, and a place for quoits and croquet. A small building, erected for the purpose, gives an opportunity for sewing and cooking

lessons for the girls. Besides the regular directors the pastor and his wife give much of their time to the playground also. On Wednesdays the parents are invited to bring their suppers for a picnic in the orchard beside the playground. The average attendance at these evening occasions has been about forty; the average attendance of children during the day, about thirty-five.

The playground is supported by a Japanese tea garden which the ladies hold in the early summer. This calls in



JAPANESE TEA GARDEN AT NORTH STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT

many motorists and is in itself a valuable social occasion for the neighborhood, as it brings the city and society to the country.

Far Hills, New Jersey, which is also a very small village, has had a community playground for a decade or more, and there are a vast number of small villages where a similar work might well be undertaken. Probably the ideal place for the location of a playground is not in a great city but in a place of from three to five thousand inhabitants.

THE COUNTY FAIR

The exhibition is one of the best methods of imparting knowledge. The World's Fair in Chicago was one of the greatest educational inspirations that has come to this country. Every great fair is the chief event in the lives of many of those who travel little, and is talked about for the rest of their lives. The county fair appears like a pocket edition of



PLAYGROUND AT NORTH STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT

such a fair, but it is not so in fact, for it has no plan or serious purpose and is largely an expedient of the merchants to draw trade.

It should be conducted by the farmers and in the interest of the farmers, not by the merchants in the interest of the merchants. It should hold in view some ideal of rural life, and aim to give exhibits along the road to and in the interest of progress. The apple institutes of the Northwest

are admirable examples of what such a fair might be. These apple fairs are expositions of all the latest methods and appliances of the trade, and an institute is held at the same time, at which many of the vital problems of the industry are discussed. I see no reason why there should not be such an educational organization of every fair. The college of agriculture and domestic science would gladly coöperate and furnish lecturers and demonstrators for institute work, as they are already doing in a number of cases. Such a fair, which would conceive largely of its task, and aim to represent not merely pigs and sheep but country life and its fundamental problems, would be a great force for rural improvement, but the mere exhibition of the largest apple or pumpkin means nothing to anybody. President Butterfield of the Amherst Agricultural College says also that we must develop a conscience in the farmers that will prompt them to have something to exhibit each year for the benefit of the others.

The county fair as a fair is not much of a success, but it is a great social occasion to the countryside, one of the greatest of the year to the children. The fact that the people attend so largely shows how much a social center is needed. It is probably not as successful socially as a township meeting would be, because most of the people are strangers to you and the ones you want to see are so mixed up with the others that they are hard to find. The side shows and the candy are the chief attractions to the children, and the horse races to the men. One of the best things that might be done would be to exhibit with a good deal of fullness the work and play of the school children. These contests of school children would be apt to add much to the interest and the attendance. The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. should hold exhibitions of their work. There should be drills and exhibitions by the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ORGANIZERS OF RURAL RECREATION

From our study of recreation problems thus far, it appears that while the country has no great supply of the passive diversions such as the theater, music, and art, or those nervous and mental dissipations, the roller coaster and the merry-go-round, yet for all forms of active recreation it has the best facilities there are. The country does not lack opportunity, but it lacks appreciation of the value of recreation and it lacks leadership in getting the movement under way. The undirected playground proved a failure in the city, and it is this same lack of direction that is the weakness of the situation in the country. In the pages that have gone before there has been an effort to show some of the means and agencies through which this organization might come. It is apparent that to make the country appeal to the young and be a really ideal place for the rearing of children, the adults must come to hold a juster estimate of life's values and see that prosperity is not all of living. There must be restored to rural life, in yet larger measure than it once had, the romance and adventure and coöperation of pioneer days. To change the spirit of a people is no light task, but it is not an impossible one surely, when the change that is proposed is a return to an earlier spirit and to conditions that are demanded by human nature itself for the gratification of the most fundamental of social wants that, unsatisfied, are now breeding discontent. To bring in this better day all the rural agencies that make for progress must coöperate. The rural school,

the agricultural college, the church, and the grange must each do its part. So also there is a series of persons each of whom must take some share in the work.

THE CLERGYMAN

Under ideal conditions the rural clergyman may do all and be the best possible agency in organizing rural life and sociability, because the church offers with its social opportunity the message of idealism, love, and social service which the country needs. At present, however, the rural church is decadent, and there are almost no resident pastors. Its many creeds have forced the community apart rather than drawn it together. The organization of recreation and society for the whole community seems to be the salvation of the rural church. If it sees this in time, then the rural clergyman will become one of the most important factors in the whole situation. Wherever there is a rural church with a resident pastor and a social viewpoint, it can do much. The church is beginning to see this, and there are many pastors, especially in the villages, who are already serving as scout masters or as baseball managers. The ordinary donations and entertainments of the church are valuable social occasions in rural communities.

THE TEACHER

The students in the normal schools are now, in most cases, getting a certain amount of training that will fit them to organize social-center work, play festivals, pageants, picnics, camps, etc. In many normal schools they are also having preached to them the gospel of play and the rural-life movement and its requirements. Many of them are coming to see the need of making rural life less dull and hard. The rural teacher is being better paid; her position in the community is becoming more secure. With the general teaching

of agriculture, we must have more men. It is reasonable to suppose that the rural teacher is to take a much larger part in organizing rural recreation than she has in the past. There can be no question of the wisdom of her doing so, if she does not go too fast and if she selects forms that appeal to the community. It will make her known, and the community will be grateful. She can often get up riding or walking parties, camping expeditions for week-ends, community tournaments in tennis, volley ball, and baseball, or organize Boy Scout patrols and the Camp Fire Girls, or she can start a parents' association and have pleasant social occasions at the schoolhouse. Her limitations are her youth and inexperience and her insecurity of position and early marriage, which remove her from the work just as she begins to be efficient.

THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

This official is not found in all counties, though he probably soon will be, as he lies in the line of educational progress. He can determine the sort of play and athletics the schools are to have. He can get up pageants and play festivals, and he can promote social activities and lectures in the evening. The county superintendent is, however, himself much too busy to do all the work that needs to be done. He can assist in but not conduct rural recreation. He might be given several assistants who would each have charge of the recreation in different townships, and who would rank as supervisors of the special branches, such as agriculture and drawing. This experiment was made in Tennessee last year with a recreation director for Hamilton County. Some such organization of rural recreation is entirely feasible. Very many county superintendents are alive to the need, and not a few are beginning to organize their counties.

THE COUNTY SECRETARIES OF THE Y.M.C.A. AND Y.W.C.A.

These are both new positions that have great promise in improving rural conditions for young people. Both of these secretaries have had some training along the lines of public recreation. They have the social spirit, and their work demands the social organization of rural groups. Nearly everywhere both associations are already starting recreational activities of various kinds. In many cases a play festival is held, and there are nearly always some athletics and some camping. However, the County Y.W.C.A. is only just making a beginning, and the Y.M.C.A. is reaching only sixty counties. The county is too large a territory for any person to oversee unless he has many assistants, and each of the secretaries has his or her own special work to do.

THE AGRICULTURAL SECRETARY

The newest recruit in the field of rural recreation is the agricultural secretary. These are men from the agricultural colleges for the most part. They have the spirit of the new movement for rural progress. They are as a rule well paid and capable. I have no statistics as to how many counties have thus far been organized, but I found forty-two of these men this summer in North Dakota alone. Their number certainly runs up into the hundreds and perhaps to nearly a thousand at the present time. If the work continues to be as promising as it has seemed to be thus far, every progressive county will soon have such an official. All business has tended toward larger and larger units of organization during the past century, but this has been true to a much more limited extent on the farm than elsewhere. The large business admits of skilled supervision of unskilled workmen. Such supervision the country industries have sadly lacked.

The agricultural secretaries can only suggest, but their suggestions are proving tremendously valuable in many quarters. The county has never had a real executive officer, and it would seem that more and more the agricultural secretary should become that officer. Under the socialistic state he would be the business manager of the county. He naturally has a political opportunity also that no other man in the county has, if he wishes to go into politics.

In North Dakota I find that these men are organizing farmers' clubs throughout their counties, which are devoted in part to business and in part to sociability. In the summer they often meet on Saturday afternoons; a picnic supper is provided, and games for the children. All through the year the children attend with their parents. The meetings are held in the farmhouses in winter and usually last for an afternoon and an evening. The children have a room for themselves.

A PAID ORGANIZER OF RECREATION NEEDED IN THE COUNTRY

Each of the agencies that have been mentioned is feeling the need of more recreation in the country; each is already doing something and will do more, but all together cannot meet the actual need. The city has given up trying to organize recreation through volunteer agencies. What is everybody's business is nobody's business. There will be great improvement over the present conditions from these agencies alone, but there will not be real efficiency in rural recreation until the country has its play director as the city has. At present the conduct of play is being generally accepted by the city as a municipal function. It belongs quite as much to the country as to the city, and the play director for the country should also be a public official. To many this will seem

like a break with all rural traditions, but it is not really so. In Germany they have had for a long time, in some of the provinces at least, a rural supervisor of play who is known as a *Spiel-Inspector*. He has to see that there are places for swimming in summer and skating in winter. He organizes athletic contests and play festivals. He gives courses in play to the teachers. He institutes picnics and entertainments for adults. A bill was introduced into the legislature of the state of Illinois last year providing for somewhat similar organization of rural recreation in Illinois.

THE RECREATION DISTRICT

If there is to be a play director for the country, how large should his playground be? There are three possible answers to this question if he is to be a public official: the district, the township, or the county. The district apparently is not large enough to support him. The district does not offer enough variety of social attainment or leadership to make society as stimulating as it should be. The county is too large to be known, that is, for the director to know the people or the play facilities. The township seems to be indicated as the proper territory for this organization. If the township has the consolidated school, with its township park and athletic fields in connection with it, the organizer of recreation will be mainly the director of this playground and of the social center. After school and on Saturdays and evenings he will need to be there. Perhaps through the social center he can organize nearly everything that needs to be done, though it would be well for him to get about the township as well. The logical person for the director of the township recreation is the principal of the consolidated school, if he should be capable of doing it. It should mean of course an increase of salary and release from much of the school work he is now carrying.

THE WORK OF THE RURAL-RECREATION DIRECTOR

The work that the recreation director will need to do has been outlined with some completeness in the pages that have gone before. He needs first of all to organize the various agencies in each neighborhood — at the social center if there is one, in the community if there is not — into a League for Rural Progress or a Civic League. This organization should have general charge of the movement and take the responsibility of it. It would fall to this play director to introduce games that are suitable to the country; to get up athletic tournaments, pageants, and play festivals; to organize the Boy Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls; to conduct institutes and lectures and Chautauquas; to select suitable activities for the social center and appropriate facilities for the picnic grove. He might well be the most important official in the township and probably would be so wherever there was a consolidated school and social center. This would require, in the beginning at least, a very high-grade person at a good salary.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A PHILANTHROPIST

Mrs. A. E. Kent has attempted in the Tamalpais center one solution of this problem of rural recreation — that of providing the fine social center and rural playground as a thing by itself. However, the county work of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. is being done without equipment. The country lacks not space but organization of its play and social life. The probable solution of the rural-recreation problem is not through the special center but through the consolidated school and the picnic grove or township park. The country communities are too conservative to employ or support, in the beginning, an official to do the work of a play director, but I

question if there is anywhere a more attractive opportunity for private beneficence. What better service could a philanthropist render to the country home of his childhood than to endow for it, for a term of years, such an official? It would be an experiment in which the whole country would take keen interest, and if the right person were secured, it could not well fail to contribute powerfully to the solution of many vital problems of the rural community.

PART FOUR

THE RURAL SOCIAL CENTER

THE SOCIAL CENTER—THE HOPE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE CURE OF ISOLATION

Democracy, the power, or rule, of the people, presupposes frequent meetings of the people to deliberate and decide what is to be done. This again presupposes a common meeting ground where these deliberations can take place. In national affairs we have delegated to Congress the making of our laws, but in local affairs the people themselves must be their own congress and must have their own meeting place if they are to be well governed.

In the ancient democracies of Greece the people met together in the market place to determine the policy of the state and to elect from their friends and acquaintances the officers of the year. These democracies were cities that were scarcely more than villages from the modern standpoint. Only a small portion of the inhabitants were voters, so the mechanism was comparatively simple. In the case of the United States the country has become too vast and its interests too complicated to have the policies of state decided in that way. We have a representative democracy. However, if we will observe our form of organization, we shall see that this great country is supposed to be built up of a series of democracies, each a little larger than the one of lower order. In the cities we have the wards and in the country the township, the county, and the state, each of which is a little democracy within a larger democracy. In the wards of the cities and in the rural townships we have units that correspond in many ways to the original democracies of Greece.

The Greeks, however, had their agora, or social center, where the people were accustomed to assemble and where it was possible to discuss all public affairs. The town hall served this purpose to a considerable extent in early New England, but there is no center at the present time for the city ward or the rural township. This is probably the reason that "ward politics" has been a synonym for all that is bad in politics, and that the township government has been so ineffective in securing results. We can never have sound politics until we organize and purify this basal unit of our democracy. It is this great aim that lies before the social-center movement—to give to the people some agora, forum, market place, or center where they can assemble for social converse and consider, discuss, and organize the public welfare.

For the city the social center promises the restoration of the community and recreation for all. But it is far more necessary for the country, because to the country it must give political effectiveness, business coöperation, and social life. It is the natural cure for the political indifference, the individualism in business, and the social isolation of the farm.

CHAPTER XV

THE IDEALS AND METHODS OF ORGANIZING SOCIAL CENTERS

There is great interest in the social-center movement all over the country just now, and a very rapid development is going on. In 1909 the University of Wisconsin employed Mr. Edward J. Ward of Rochester, N.Y., who had previously had charge of the social centers in that city, to organize social centers about the state of Wisconsin — a task to which he has since devoted himself. In October, 1911, there was organized at Madison the Social-Center Association of America, of which Josiah Strong was elected president and Professor Ward secretary. State laws have been passed in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and a number of other states requiring school boards to open schoolhouses for social purposes whenever the public so desires. In the last presidential campaign the three candidates each indorsed the idea of this wider use of school buildings, and in Chicago, Rochester, and several other cities the schools were used for campaign speeches and in some for polling places as well. One of the most able addresses that were given at the formation of the association was made by Governor Wilson, so it would look as though the movement should receive all due official encouragement during the years that are upon us. It has the indorsement of the National Education Association and all prominent educators everywhere. The spread of the idea has been so quiet, and the recent developments have been so little reported, that it is almost impossible at the present time to tell

how general it has become, but forty-seven cities with two hundred eighteen centers are reported in the *Playground* for January, 1913, and it is safe to say that a beginning has been made in nearly every city and county of the country. This beginning is often very feeble and inadequate, but it is a seed out of which may well grow a great movement. While perhaps it is possible to do the work best in connection with the church, wherever an adequate church which has the support of the whole community can be found, there are few adequate churches with resident ministers in the country, and it is well-nigh impossible to have this development without this condition.

DIFFERENT AIMS IN SOCIAL-CENTER DEVELOPMENT

The term "social center" is used to describe three different types of activities, which are educational, social, and civic. The movement is developing along different lines in different localities. It lacks suitable equipment everywhere, and nowhere has a real community center yet appeared. In some places the activities are largely educational, with public lectures, classes in domestic economy, manual training, and gymnastics; in others it is largely recreational, with singing, dramatics, games, and dancing; while in yet others it is becoming the civic forum for the meeting of various clubs and the discussion of public questions. New York took the lead in the beginning in developing the social center of the first two types. Rochester has been largely responsible for developing the social center of the civic type. This was similar to what parents' associations and School Improvement Associations had been doing in many places, but the movement took a new start with a new spirit of social equality at Rochester, and to Professor Forbes, the president of the school board, and to Professor Ward, the superintendent of the social centers,

is due great credit for the developments both at Rochester and elsewhere. The Rochester type of social center comes the nearest to creating a real community center of all the social centers thus far attempted, and it has also within itself the machinery that is necessary to reform politics and improve the community, which the other forms of social centers have



EVENING RECREATION CENTER IN NEW YORK CITY

not. Under the New York ideals the social centers are carried on by the Board of Education ; under the Rochester ideal the social center becomes an expression of the people themselves.

METHODS OF ORGANIZATION THROUGH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

As the social center is in most cases using the public schools and is often a real extension of the work of the schools to the community, it might seem that this is a work that belongs naturally to the school board, and it certainly

should have their coöperation if the school board finds itself in the position to give it. The educational phases of the social center—the classes, the lectures, the school exhibitions, and the library work—should naturally be under the school authorities, and it is well for them to take the initiative in these matters whenever possible. But so far as possible the social and civic interests of the center should be democratic and managed by the people themselves. School boards often will not have the authority to initiate this work unless a special ordinance is passed conferring this right upon them, and they will seldom have the necessary money in the beginning. Hence, however properly this work might belong to the school board, in very many cases at least the first steps will have to be taken by private individuals who are interested.

THE SOCIAL-CENTER ASSOCIATION

It is highly important that the people should feel from the beginning that the social center belongs to them, as this will make it more popular and secure in its financial support. It is better to have the work initiated by the people of the community than to have it started by the school board or any less general agency. It is not at all difficult to begin the movement in this way. A public meeting should be called, and some one should be invited to give a talk on the social-center idea; after that there should be discussion, and a social-center association or civic league should be formed, with a temporary constitution and officers, to hold over until a later meeting, when permanent officers can be elected and a permanent constitution adopted. It is best, as a rule, to have some small dues at first. It is through organizations such as this that most of the great social progress of the last two decades has been effected. In union, organization, there is strength. Twenty-five people who are in earnest and will work together can

carry almost any movement against the indifference of twenty-five thousand. If there are half a dozen people who are interested enough to call such a meeting, and a few more who are interested enough to attend, this is an effective and admirable way to make a beginning. It is wise to have the discussion somewhat arranged for beforehand, to have a provisional constitution ready, and to have looked over the field carefully for the provisional officers, who are likely to be the permanent officers. The writer recently organized such a social-center movement in a Michigan town of some seven hundred inhabitants. A public meeting was called with a popular lecture, and a civic league was formed with about forty members, who signed the slips that evening. The league maintains a class for civic discussions, which meets at noon on Sundays, a Sunday evening lecture course with civic lectures from the State University, the Agricultural College, the various state departments, and several local sources. It has a social evening once in two weeks. It has been organized only about three months, but it has already secured dental and medical inspection for the school children, a better set of films for the moving-picture show, a closer coöperation between the grange and the town and an organization of the Camp Fire Girls, and has started a movement for domestic economy and agriculture in the local high school.

However, the country is noted for its conservatism and lack of initiative in social affairs, and if all communities had to wait for the movement to start up in their midst, there are some that would have to wait a long time.

THE RECREATION ASSOCIATION

In the cities a large part of the social centers are operated by the various playground associations. The most expensive social-center buildings that have ever been constructed are

the field houses in the Chicago playgrounds. The centers at Rochester were a part of the movement for general recreation and under the Superintendent of Playgrounds and Social Centers. In New York also the evening recreation centers are under the same superintendent as the school playgrounds. In most cities the social-center work is the winter work of the playgrounds. This enables them to hire their directors by the year and to maintain a continuous policy. However, there are no playground associations in the country, and it looks as though the social center would have to start the organized play, instead of the recreation movement organizing the social centers.

A PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Wherever there is already a parents' association or a home-and-school league in the neighborhood, this offers one of the best means of getting started, as the league may take up the social-center work as one of its regular activities. They may be able to get the school board to make an appropriation for the sake of starting the movement, and they should always attempt to do this, even though it seems certain that the request will not be granted, as it helps to familiarize the board with the idea. If they are not able to secure an appropriation, it is best to raise a small amount by private subscription, and start the movement in a small way. Most people have great reluctance in asking others to contribute money to public purposes, but it is not nearly so difficult to raise money as most people imagine. About all that is needed is the expectation of receiving what you ask for. There is a new spirit of giving in this country at the present time, and there are many people who are genuinely glad to give to a worthy cause.

A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

In nine of the Southern states the Southern Education Board is paying an organizer of school improvement associations. This work was begun in Maine some thirty years ago and was later taken up by the state of North Carolina. Professor Claxton, now Commissioner of Education, became interested in it, and through him it became one of the policies of the Southern Board to put such an organizer into the office of each Southern state superintendent of schools. This organizer goes about the state, usually with a stereopticon, and meets groups of parents who are called together by the county superintendents. She shows pictures of what other schools are doing, and suggests that they form a school improvement association which will meet at the school and work for the welfare of the school and neighborhood. These associations have been very effective in improving conditions at the schools and incidentally have organized the neighborhood to work for a public purpose. In Mississippi they usually meet once a month on Saturdays. The people bring a picnic lunch and spend the day or at least a half day. The work of the children is exhibited, and the deficiencies in the school equipment become evident. In the afternoon athletic contests are a feature. The Southern Board has done many good things that might well be copied by the North, and such an organizer might well be an assistant to every state superintendent in the country and paid from public funds. Superintendent Cook of Arkansas says that for every dollar that has gone into the salary of this person in his state there has come back to the state four hundred dollars in improved buildings and grounds alone. It is impossible to tell how much has come back in the way of a quickened social life and civic spirit. Investments that yield forty thousand per cent profit are worth

trying. I believe this organizer of school improvements is an excellent agency for the initiation of this movement when outside assistance is necessary. Of course the social center will come in time without any systematic promotion from anybody, for the consciousness of the need is already upon us ; but it ought not to be necessary to wait for this idea to percolate down to each isolated board of education throughout the country, and those who take up new movements without expert assistance are apt to do the work badly and wastefully in the beginning. The social center is essential to the welfare of country life, and it redounds to the welfare of the school directly in bringing the parents and the teachers together. As the social centers are organized in most cases in connection with the public schools, and are, in part at least, an extension of public-school work, their promotion belongs naturally to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY

It was stated at the organization of the Social-Center Association of America that six state universities had already employed social-center organizers. There is great interest in this subject in a number of states, and the rather general extension of this idea seems likely. State universities are coming to conceive of their function in terms of service such as was scarcely dreamed of a decade ago. The University of Wisconsin has led in this new conception of the university as the home of a body of specialists who would each endeavor not merely to serve the student body but to carry their message to the whole state. It has been rewarded by a phenomenal growth in numbers, in the loyalty of the citizens, and in large appropriations. It is a noble conception of the purpose and aim of the university, and is one case where it has not been merely the home of "abandoned ideals." There are advantages in such

organizing of this work, because these men can give courses at the university at the same time. Still there can be little doubt that the university is here usurping the function of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Practically, however, it may be quite possible for the university to get the money for such an expert, and it may not be at all possible for the State Superintendent to secure such an assistant; and the important thing is to have the work done.

THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

In about half of the states the agricultural college is one of the professional schools of the state university. Where the schools are separate it may be that the starting of the rural social center falls more naturally to the lot of the agricultural college than to the university. Certainly the teaching of agriculture and domestic economy, and institutes for farmers and farm women, are likely to be among its largest functions. Nearly all the rural-life conferences that have been held in connection with the agricultural colleges have declared for the development of the social center in connection with the rural schools. Wherever the agricultural college has on its staff an instructor in rural sociology who can give some of his time to this work, it is certainly as appropriate for the agricultural college as for the state university to do it. The agricultural secretaries who have recently been appointed in so many counties are doing much in the forming of farmers' clubs with both a social and a business side.

A NORMAL SCHOOL

There are some cases where the students and professors have gone out from the normal schools to organize social centers in rural schools in the territory immediately adjacent to them. This is a piece of school missionary work such as

we should naturally expect from the normal schools, and we may hope for a great extension along this line in the future. A number of normals are planning work of this character for the coming year.

It is evident from what has been said thus far that there is no lack of agencies through which social centers may be organized. If all of these agencies will work together, they



A COUNTY PLAY FESTIVAL AT THE NORMAL SCHOOL,
VALLEY CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

ought to be able to accomplish much in a short time. From whatever source the social center is organized, it should be mainly self-directed after it is once started.

WHO SHOULD MANAGE THE SOCIAL CENTER

The classes, lectures, and the library will in general have to be paid for by the educational authorities and should be managed by them. The social and civic activities should be an expression of the life of the people and managed by them so far as possible.

There will have to be some person in general charge of the center, and this person should if possible be the principal of the consolidated school, if the school is the social center, or, better, the director of recreation for the township, if such a position can be created. This serves again to emphasize the point of view of Commissioner Claxton, that the rural teacher should be a fixture in the rural community, and that he should be furnished a house with a small farm in the immediate neighborhood of the school, in the same way that a preacher is furnished a parsonage. No social center will run itself, and there must be one or more persons who are always there and who are responsible for the discipline, the readiness of everything that is to be used, and the general program. If the principal does this work, he will have to be paid for it, as will also the teachers of classes, the lecturers, and the janitor. The social center will also increase the heating bill and the lighting bill, and naturally a primary question in regard to the social center is, How are these expenses to be met?

FINANCING THE SOCIAL CENTER

Like all new movements the social center usually has to be begun by private initiative. This nearly always means three things: that the simplest and least expensive activities must be chosen; that the workers must contribute their time or serve for very small compensation; and that there must be some means of raising money. There are four ways of financing the social center: by membership dues in the social-center association; by entertainments; by the contributions of public-spirited people; by public appropriations. Probably all of these means should be used at times. It is a good thing to have a small membership fee in the social-center association in any case, so that it may not be entirely dependent on public funds. It is more blessed to give than to receive,

and giving increases the interest. There are now about fifty cities where the social centers are supported in whole or in part from public appropriations. For the most part, I believe the rural centers have been operated without any funds. The school authorities have contributed the building, and the performers have contributed the talent. However, the sort of social center which will really meet the need of a rural community cannot be so maintained; it must have a regular appropriation from the school board or from some other public source, or a considerable budget must be raised from private subscriptions. As a public enterprise the social center which becomes the real community center of a township has unusual advantages. Its constituency are the voters of the township, and they can have anything they are willing to pay for unless the law forbids.

HOW MUCH TERRITORY SHOULD THE RURAL SOCIAL CENTER COVER?

So far as the social center is carried on under the school authorities, there are two possibilities; either the school district or the township may be taken as the unit. But it is quite impossible for the single school district in most places to support the variety of activities that are needed at a social center. It cannot maintain a library that is worth while, public lectures, a gymnasium, classes in domestic science and agriculture, the moving picture, and many other things that are needed to make the social center really attractive. The social center can be maintained at the one-room school, but its activities will naturally be very much restricted, by the lack of both equipment and numbers. It would appear that the consolidated school is still more necessary to the adults than it is to the children, and that the social needs of the community are the very strongest reasons that we have at present for consolidation,

though the other reasons, arising from effectiveness in school work and economy of school administration, are entirely sufficient. Consolidation is already the accepted educational policy, and we may expect that the rapid development in this direction now going on in the most progressive states will soon reach the whole country. A village graded or high



A COUNTRY NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

school will serve, but the consolidated school for the township, with a township park and athletic ground around it, is the ideal social center for a rural community.

THE SOCIAL-CENTER BUILDING

The consolidated school should have both an auditorium and a gymnasium or hall ; but if it can have only one, it should always take the gymnasium, because the gymnasium can be seated as an auditorium whenever it is desired, and it can be used for dances, banquets, voting, and public meetings as well. It might well be the regular meeting place of the grange, the woman's club, or any other similar organizations. It would

be well if there could be a small room for the care of the babies at the time of entertainments and one or more social rooms or parlors for small neighborhood meetings, gossip, etc. As this room might serve as the teachers' room as well, it would mean no considerable extra expense. As the gymnasium might also be the town hall, the polling place, and the grange hall, it would be a positive economy for a country neighborhood. Certainly the number of changes that are needed to adapt the ordinary consolidated school for a social center are not many or serious. The states of Washington, Minnesota, and North Dakota have recently passed laws giving special state aid to consolidated schools, but their number as compared with the one-room schools is still insignificant.

TAMALPAIS CENTER, CALIFORNIA

Tamalpais Center, a few miles out of San Francisco, was built by Mrs. A. E. Kent, the mother of Congressman Kent of California, as a contribution to the recreation problem for the country and country village. The ground given consists of twenty-nine acres of level land at the foot of Mount Tamalpais. It is a beautiful location, and there is a fine club building and a competent director. There is a playground for the children, with a lady director, several baseball diamonds and football fields, and space for athletic events. A speeding track for horse races surrounds the grounds. The field house is used for dances, social gatherings, literary and debating clubs, and public lectures. The popularity of this center increases continually, and it is expected that the community will soon assume the expense of its maintenance.

A number of other centers have been constructed in the country on a somewhat less ambitious scale than the center at Tamalpais. It is another phase of the Chicago question whether we shall use the schools for social centers

or construct special centers in the parks. On the whole, the argument seems to rest with the schools, as the school center requires maintenance alone and has a far larger attendance. As the social center is one of the chief reasons for the consolidated school in most sections, it would be rather a pity to divide the argument by building a separate social center, though it is fine to have such an experiment to observe and study, for history sometimes confounds our fondest theories. All gratitude is due to Mrs. Kent for the demonstration. It is not necessary that the social-center activities should always be carried on in the same building. If there is a social center or civic organization that can stand behind the movement, the meetings may be held in such places as are available — now in a village high school, now in a church, again in the grange hall or the opera house or a private home. There are certain kinds of activities that cannot of course be carried on through such a migratory center, but there are a large number that can, and if the movement were begun in this way, it would soon develop better facilities.

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

Wherever it is necessary to carry on the social center at a one-room school, it will be an advantage if movable desks can be provided, so that the room can be seated for adults as well as for children, or cleared altogether for entertainments. If a new building is to be erected, it would be well for those who have the matter in charge to investigate the model country school which has been built by President Kirk of the State Normal School at Kirksville, Missouri, for the practice work of his rural teachers. This has been described in many articles, and President Kirk can furnish a detailed account of it on application. One of the features of this school building that fits it especially to be a social center is that the seats

are not fastened to the floor but are on little platforms, so that they can be moved to one side and the room can be seated with folding chairs for adults or the floor cleared for dancing or games. A stereopticon fits into its own cabinet in the back of the room. A gasoline engine in the basement pumps water for the toilets and shower baths and generates the electricity to light the school building and the lantern.



MODEL RURAL SCHOOL, KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI

The engine is operated by one of the older boys. In the attic of the school is a large cooking range, which is used for lessons in domestic science by the older girls, and which might be used equally well for afternoon teas by the woman's club.

A PRIVATE HOUSE

In rural communities there are certain very decided advantages in an itinerant social center at the homes of the members. The house will usually have several usable rooms,

so that the children, the young people, and the adults can each meet by themselves if it is desirable for them to meet separately. The home suggests visiting and social life, and where the numbers are small they will doubtless be much more comfortable in the homes than they will be in the one-room schoolhouse. This will tend to create a habit of visiting and friendliness at other times. Refreshments and music are also great promoters of sociability and acquaintance, and the home will usually have the facilities for these. The farmers' clubs in North Dakota, which are essentially itinerant social centers, are meeting thus in the homes. They have regular literary programs, debates, lectures, and a good time. Of course this is feasible only when the communities are small and scattered and the people are fairly well acquainted and friendly.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RURAL CHURCH AS A SOCIAL CENTER

There have been a number of recent articles and books that seem to indicate the belief that the rural church is to be the social center of the rural community. As this view is held by many of the clergymen themselves, it indicates a point of view that is hopeful. The rural church might be the very best social center that the country could have, for it offers not merely a social opportunity, but an appreciation of spiritual values and a sense of social service. It is to the advantage of the church to become such a center, for the rural surveys seem to show that in general only those churches that are organizing the social life of their communities are growing. It is a proper work for the church, for the hired man and the farm boys are falling into dissipation from the lack of legitimate amusements. The farmers and their sons and daughters are leaving for the town and the city, there to be subject to many temptations for which they are not prepared, and to clog the wheels of city progress by their conservatism.

DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO ORGANIZE SOCIETY AND RECREATION

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In the epistles we are told in various places that the test of Christianity is the spirit of brotherly love. If it be the purpose of Christianity to promote human brotherhood, or, in more common terms, real friendship among men, then it is no less the duty of the church to promote sociability and friendliness than it is to hold church services. It is impossible

for men to love each other unless they know each other — unless they meet together in frequent social intercourse. If Christianity is applied love, the duty of the church is the development of love. This is the task of religious education — of the church and of the individual Christian. But the numerous churches have often split the community in pieces rather than cemented it together.

TIME FOR DOCTRINAL SERMONS IS PAST

The time for the doctrinal sermon is past. Any live minister ought to have something to say to his people as a father would to his children ; but neither Jesus himself nor any of his contemporaries ever looked upon his mission as essentially that of preaching. He was called the Great Physician, the friend of publicans and sinners. It was said of him that he went about doing good. The minister ought to be the social organizer and spiritual counselor of his flock. It should be his aim to bring to pass the kingdom of heaven upon earth, or, in other words, to promote the spirit of love and the deeds that spring from love.

DECADENT CONDITION OF COUNTRY CHURCHES

It is needless to say that the country church has not conceived of its duty in this way. There is no question, also, but that the church in the country is at present in a decadent condition. The Reverend E. C. Hayward in his book on "Institutional Work for the Country Church" says :

Conditions have greatly changed in the last few years. But few country churches can be said to be in a flourishing condition ; the majority are barely holding their own, some are losing ground, all are struggling heroically for life ; but the tide is against them, something must be done.

In the studies that were made under the Department of the Church and Country Life of the Board of Home Missions of

the Presbyterian Church in the United States it was found that sixteen hundred rural churches in Illinois, seven hundred fifty in Missouri, six hundred in Tennessee, etc. had been abandoned in the last ten years. It is estimated that there are ten thousand abandoned rural churches in the country as a whole. There are probably thirty or forty thousand more that should be abandoned in order that rural parishes may be consolidated as we are now consolidating rural schools. But this is not what has taken place with these churches; they have been simply given up from lack of support.

ORGANIZING RECREATION AND SOCIABILITY BUILDS UP THE CHURCH

This can only mean that the rural church is not rendering, on the whole, a vital service to rural life. The church survey also discovered other interesting facts. In one county of Indiana seventy-six churches were found. Of those among this number that were organizing the social and recreational life of their people, sixty-five per cent were found to be growing in membership. Of those that were not organizing the social and recreational life only twelve per cent were found to be growing. In other counties, out of two hundred fifty-six churches that were not organizing any form of recreation only one was found to be growing. It is evidently good policy for the church to take this work seriously.

We have several shining examples of what such a church can do. The Reverend Matthew McNutt of Plainfield, Illinois, is one of the best-known examples. He came from the McCormick Theological Seminary to a dying country church twelve years ago. He first organized a singing school, which brought the young people into the church one night a week to sing. It soon developed that there were several good voices, and out of this singing grew a boys' quartet, a girls'

quartet, several soloists, and a good chorus for the church. After this a gospel chorus was organized that met around at the houses of the members. A considerable part of these evenings were given to sociability and became very popular among the young people. This built up at once the church attendance and the choir. A series of sociables were planned and held at the different houses of the neighborhood. No



A TOMATO-VINE-PRUNING CONTEST

charge was made, but light refreshments were served free. These developed a spirit of good-comradeship among the young people. There was a missionary circle for the girls, which was largely social, and an athletic club among the boys. An annual home-coming and picnic was arranged for, and a series of extension lectures and entertainments were given in the winter.

Since Mr. McNutt came to this pastorate twelve years ago the church has erected a new ten-thousand-dollar edifice, which

was paid for as soon as completed. The pastor's salary has been raised forty per cent, and more than six thousand dollars has been given in the last five years to outside benevolences. Practically every one in the countryside belongs to the church. This church is out in the open country, six miles from the nearest railroad or trolley line. It is not far from Chicago, Joliet, or Aurora, yet almost none of its young people have left the farm to seek city life. During his entire pastorate there only one young person in the neighborhood is known to have gone wrong.

The Reverend Mr. McNutt says :

When a church once gets a reputation in a community of helping the helpless, for befriending the friendless, for showing mercy to the poor, for rendering a cheerful, loving, helpful service to all in need, there is no question about its becoming a church full of life — a church that will command the respect, the coöperation, the support of everybody.

The great trouble with the church in the past has been that it has been ministering to itself, seeking to run a "gospel ark" for its own members, without feeling that it owed any duty of service to the community as a whole. The reward of both men and institutions is in close proportion to the service they render.

The Reverend Anton T. Boise, in reporting on his survey of rural conditions in northern Missouri, says :

The strongest country church that I found was one where for more than twenty-five years it had been the custom of the young people to go off together every Sunday after church or Sunday School to some one place for dinner and a good time and also to meet together at some home once or twice a month, during the week. In that community I was told by two different men whose word I think I can trust that for twenty years there had not been a case of a girl going wrong, and that none of the young men or boys had ever been known to be drunk.

THE ORGANIZATION NEEDED IS NOT DIFFICULT

The things that have been spoken of in the way of recreation and sociability are not difficult to organize. The young people in the country are eager for such opportunities and only too glad to respond. Almost any girls' Bible class can be organized into a social club to meet on some evening or afternoon during the week. It is easy to turn a boys' class into a baseball team or a Boy Scout patrol. The task of social organization is in some ways much easier in the country than in the city, because there is a lack of other attractions there. In the city any organization that may be formed will have to bid against the moving-picture show, the theater, the dance hall, the pool room, the cheap excursion, parks, playgrounds, etc. There is no lack of society in the city, but in the country there are none of these counter attractions, and there is a hunger for companionship. The entire problem of rural recreation might well be turned over to the church, if every country church had and could support a pastor like the Reverend Mr. McNutt. But this is far from being the case.

Probably country churches need to be consolidated even more than rural schools. They have often created a most unchristian spirit in country neighborhoods, and have sometimes been kept alive largely by the frictions and spirit of strife which they stirred up. They have divided the community up so much that it has been impossible to get an audience at any one church or to raise enough money to support the minister. The country community needs sadly a community center. The centralized church, such as the one at Plainfield, is probably the best center possible.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH IS WITHOUT A PASTOR

The country church is at the present time without a pastor. In the study of the churches of northern Missouri it was found that ninety-two per cent of the country ministers had four or more churches, and that the remaining eight per cent had two or three churches. There was not a single minister who was giving all his time to one country church. All but three of these ministers lived in the towns and not in the open country at all; ninety-two per cent of the churches were what are known as three-hour churches; that is, they had two preaching services one Sunday a month. Such churches, of course, have no pastors. It is impossible for this absentee preacher to minister to the social needs of his flock. He is not a minister or a pastor, but only a preacher. This condition is as disastrous to the country spiritually as absentee-landlordism is industrially.

Again, many of the country preachers are not highly educated; they have not the requisite social interest or training or breadth of view to organize its social life.

All the signs seem to indicate that a better time is coming to the country church. Many of the leaders of thought are alive to the problem. The seminaries are beginning to give training. The rural-life conferences and summer courses for country ministers are giving direction to the movement. But it will be a generation, probably, before this condition can be remedied.

CAN THE CHURCH DO THE WORK WITHOUT A PASTOR?

How far is it possible for the church to organize the social life of the community without a resident pastor? It is purely a question of leadership. Social leadership is always inadequate in the rural community, but if the country churches

would conceive of this as a duty that they owe to the community, and to themselves as Christians, and to the church, they might do much, and the church would get an increasing support from the community that might enable it soon to maintain a pastor.

Nearly all country churches are doing something at the present time. Even the ordinary preaching services are social occasions more or less. The Reverend Mr. Boise says :

I was talking not long ago with a very intelligent seventeen-year-old boy, the son of a well-to-do farmer. I asked him what recreations there were for himself and his friends. He thought a minute and then answered, "Well, there is church on Sunday, and then there is Sunday school" — but he had trouble in thinking of anything else.

Most churches have also oyster suppers and strawberry festivals in order to raise their share of the minister's salary. These are held selfishly by the church for its own ends, but they serve as valuable social occasions for the countryside nevertheless. Some of these events were, I remember, among the largest events in my own childhood.

Probably the largest, and often the only, social service the church is rendering is represented by the Woman's Missionary Society, which frequently meets and sews for the sick or the poor of the neighborhood. Probably the service which the women render to themselves and to each other, by meeting together in a social way, is no less than their service to the sick or the poor, but they do not usually think of this side, and render their work unselfishly. It is to be feared that there is a good deal of gossip at these meetings, and that there is not as much intellectual stimulation as there should be. But however conducted, they are worth while, as they are often the only social gatherings of any kind the farm wife attends. If the rural church will only see the value of these things, it will be possible for almost any church congregation

to hold several good free sociables during the year, which will be a boon to the young people who want to get together, and will be sure to create a spirit of friendliness toward the church.

Any capable teacher of a young men's Bible class can organize his class into a baseball team or a Boy Scout patrol to meet at some time during the week, and this will be good for the boys and good for the Sunday school. A good deal of this is already being done, as Mr. West, Chief Scout executive, estimates that eighty-five per cent of all scout patrols are organized in connection with Sunday schools. At least twenty-five per cent of the scout masters are ministers.

In the same way it would not be difficult for any capable teacher of a Sunday-school class of older girls to organize them into a missionary or other band that would meet once a week or once a month for discussions, sewing, and sociability.

It is believed that a realization of the value and the need of social life is getting abroad in the country communities, and that we may expect more and more from the church in the way of the organization of recreation and sociability along all of these lines. The results will not, however, be satisfactory until the rural church can get a pastor, and a pastor who conceives that he owes a duty of service to the community as a whole. With such a pastor the country church will assume a new importance in the rural community, and nearly all will become members. His preaching will be a by-product of a life of service, but it will be better and more effective preaching.

CHAPTER XVII

EDUCATIONAL EXTENSION THROUGH THE RURAL SOCIAL CENTER

If it has been decided to form a social center, the first thing to agree upon will naturally be the program of things to be undertaken. Whenever it is possible, the initiation of the work should follow a social survey that would discover the actual needs of the neighborhood and the material that is available for leadership, teaching, and lectures, also the facilities that are present for the various undertakings under consideration. It obviously would not be wise to start a class in cooking if there were no ranges, or a class in gymnastics without a gymnasium. People are apt to take it for granted that they know what these facilities are, but a little investigation usually reveals many resources that had not been thought of.

SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS

There are at least six distinctively educational uses of the social center, all of which are important both to the rural school and to the rural community. The first of these is that the social center serves or may serve to bring the school and the community together, to make the teachers and parents acquainted, and to show the parents just what progress their children are making in school. To this end some of the regular meetings of the social center should be school exhibitions or fairs in which the entire program for the evening is in the hands of the school, and it should exhibit all that it is

doing, with some of the work of each pupil in each subject so far as possible. The exhibition in manual training, agriculture, domestic science, and the work of the corn and canning clubs would be likely to be of especial interest to the parents, and the praise and criticism of the adults would be very stimulating to the children and would go a long way toward furnishing a natural and effective incentive to the children in their work. There should be some recitations and dialogues, and the evening might well close with light refreshments served by the class in domestic economy. The possibility of such an exhibition will, of course, be more or less dependent on the place of meeting and the school curriculum.

EXTENSION CLASSES IN AGRICULTURE AND DOMESTIC SCIENCE

A second educational feature that is worth while is extension courses in agriculture for the young men and extension courses in domestic economy for the young women. Our old idea of education was that a portion of life, from six to twenty perhaps, should be set aside for it, and that during this period we must crowd into the mind all that the person would ever need to know. We have discovered, however, that the child is not interested in many of the things that we have sought to teach him and that he soon forgets them. There is coming in to-day a new conception. Education is a process that begins with birth and ends with death. It is impossible in a large way to prepare in one period of life for what is to happen in another, because the child is not at that time interested in these things, and by concentrating his attention on preparation for the future we may cause him to miss the legitimate experiences of the period to which he at that time belongs. We are not very good prophets, and it is hard to predict what the future of the child may be or just what preparation he needs. The world is moving on so fast that it is impossible to prepare

to-day for conditions ten or twenty years hence, and the man who ceases to study for five years becomes obsolete. As the result, nearly every university and normal school has its summer session. Summer Chautauquas are held in nearly every village of the Middle West. The Y.M.C.A. workers have their annual encampment, the ministers have their conferences, and there are state and other associations that are constantly reviewing the latest things for the teachers.

Probably this extension training is more needed by the farmers and their wives than by any other class. Professor Carver of Harvard says :

To be a thoroughly equipped, scientific farmer probably requires a higher education, certainly a more complete scientific education, than any of the learned professions, with the possible exception of medicine. Such a farmer must obviously know something of botany, zoölogy, chemistry, physics, and surveying ; and some special and difficult branches of these sciences he must know extremely well. Principles of plant and animal breeding ought to be thoroughly understood, if it were possible.

Despite the difficulty of his profession, most farmers have received no training in the principles involved, but have merely learned from their fathers or others to do things in a certain way. The farmer often does not believe in the training of the agricultural college, and speaks of the graduates as "kid-glove farmers." In medicine it is recognized that the only way to proficiency is the medical school. The aspiring minister believes that he should attend the school of theology, and the would-be teacher that he should go to the normal school, but the farmer does not believe that farming can be taught. On the face of it this seems unreasonable, and it must be either that our agricultural colleges have been very inefficient or that the farmer has a mistaken idea of their value. It is the opinion of the writer that the agricultural colleges have made good, and that the farmers have made a

mistake, largely from confusing the gentlemen farmers from the city, who farm extravagantly for amusement, with the trained agriculturalists turned out by the schools. Certainly many of the principles involved in farming are simple enough, and to take it for granted that they cannot be taught is to assume a good deal of stupidity on the part either of the teacher or of the pupil.

About one person in every two hundred in the community is a teacher. About one in every five hundred is a doctor, about one in every six hundred is a lawyer, about one in every ten is a farmer; yet there are probably more prospective teachers in normal schools, more embryo doctors in the medical schools, more law students in law schools, than there are farmers in the agricultural colleges. Perhaps one adult woman in fifty is a teacher and needs to understand pedagogy. Every woman is likely to become a housewife and mother and needs to understand domestic economy and the rearing of children. Yet there are probably two or three times as many women in normal schools as there are in schools of domestic economy. There is obviously something out of joint here, unless it be true that men know by instinct how to select seed and cultivate the soil, and women know by the same means how to cook and to care for babies. If we compare the methods of the average farmers with the methods of the best farmers, it becomes reasonably evident that there are some at least who have not inherited the secret of profitable agriculture. If we compare the rate of infant mortality in the city slums or in negro homes with that in the more intelligent families, it becomes evident that there are some at least who have not inherited a knowledge of the rearing of children, for fully a quarter of these children are carried off under one year of age by preventable disease, and mostly for ignoring sanitary laws which are well known.

In all past ages and periods the tillers of the soil have been tied to the land. The race settled down when it evolved from the nomadic to the agricultural stage. The American farmers are more mobile than any other farmers have ever been, but they are still our most fixed and least traveled class. Perhaps this is one reason why so few farmers' boys go away to agricultural colleges. The fertility of the soil and the annual yield in a number of different staple crops is declining. We have had a great start, but a number of European countries are now making progress more rapidly than we in everything except the application of labor-saving machinery to agriculture. The need of agricultural education cannot be met by the state agricultural colleges as they now exist, because too small a proportion of the farmers' boys are going to them and because the great majority of the farmers are beyond the school age as they understand it. President Pritchett of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching finds that the effective range of the college or university is not more than a hundred miles. Colleges and universities draw from the more mobile classes, and the range of the college and university is surely much greater than that of the agricultural college. In order to reach the people, agriculture must be brought to them in the form of many agricultural high schools or separate agricultural colleges or both, or through extension teaching. It is perfectly feasible that each consolidated school should have a room for agriculture and another for domestic science, that should be reserved largely for the young men and women during the slack season on the farm. Twenty years ago the country youth often continued to attend the district school in the winter time until they were twenty or twenty-one. To-day they have generally finished the course by the time they are fourteen or fifteen, and consider their education complete. During six months of the year these

country boys and girls do not have very much to do and might well continue their education in a rural high school or extension school. In a number of states they are beginning to give training in domestic economy and agriculture for these older boys and girls. This seems to me one of the most hopeful movements that has been begun for years. Ideally it would put an agricultural school in every township of the state. If this work is carried on from fourteen to twenty, it ought to give these young people a really good training in the work they are to follow.

In Denmark, which is less than one third as large as the state of New York, there are eighty extension high schools and, I understand, twenty-eight agricultural colleges. It has a sterile soil, yet Denmark is the most prosperous agricultural country in Europe to-day. One can but wonder what the United States, with a congenial climate, a fertile soil, and an enterprising people, might do with such a system of agricultural education.

The practice of farming is probably farther behind our knowledge than is the practice of any other trade or profession. I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that the application of our well-established knowledge of agriculture to the actual farming would at least double the profits of the farms for the whole country and might do a great deal more than this. This would mean an increased return of a hundred or more millions of dollars a year to most states — an amount that most of us would think worth considering. The prosperity of the farmer means the prosperity of the whole country, so this becomes a matter of really national importance. Any expense that may be necessary in order to bring this knowledge to the farmers will be justified by the results, but we should naturally seek the method which is most effective and least expensive.

Again, the agricultural secretaries and the corn and canning clubs are making possible the extension of this work as it has not been possible before. I recently attended a meeting of a class of boys that had come from all parts of a rural county in North Dakota. A lesson in feeding milch cows was being given by the secretary. The problem was the necessary food to maintain the cow and produce twenty-five pounds of milk per day. The analysis of the milk was shown from a table, also the amount of each constituent necessary to maintain the cow.

A fodder of timothy hay was tried. It was found to be low in protein. In order to produce the twenty-five pounds of milk, much expensive oil meal and bran or similar fodders would have to be added. It was shown also that timothy had a low yield to the acre and was a hard crop on the land. Hence it was concluded that it would be very expensive to maintain a milch cow on timothy and the grain she would need to be fed. A ration of alfalfa was tried and found, with ensilage, to contain nearly the constituents required; with a small ration of corn and oats the necessary protein, carbohydrates, and fats were available. This was shown to be a cheap food because it was all raised on the farm, and both the alfalfa and the corn gave a large tonnage to the acre and tended to increase rather than diminish the fertility of the land. I am not an authority on the scientific accuracy of the facts brought out, but I assume that they were correct, and I have no doubt but that one lesson would be more than worth the secretary's salary to the county.

EXTENSION LECTURES

The extension teaching spoken of in the previous paragraphs is not strictly social-center work, though it is apt to result from the organization of the social center; but so far

as it is done in the evening and with certain social features that grow naturally out of the work in domestic economy, it comes very near to the regular activities of the social center. Such extension teaching will do much for the younger generation, but it does not seem likely that the adult farmer will go to school, even if the school is brought to his door. He can only be reached through extension lectures and farmers' institutes. There is far greater need of extension lectures from the agricultural college than from the university. For social and educational reasons there ought to be an extension lecture in every farming community at least once a week through six or eight months of the year. I used to be a local superintendent of lectures in New York City. My center was on the East Side, where the people were largely foreigners, with a very imperfect understanding of the English language. There were open saloons, theaters, and recreation centers on every hand, yet these lectures were nearly always well attended. There are one hundred seventy-five centers in New York City where such lectures are being given, and there are more than four thousand lecturers. Some fifty other cities have now taken up these free extension lectures. The country needs them more than the city. It has few rival attractions, and it needs the stimulus and information that they might give. It seems likely that the attendance would be as good or better than it is in the city. In my experience as a lecturer the smaller the town the larger the attendance is likely to be. The state can afford to furnish lectures to its rural population quite as well as the city can afford to furnish them to the immigrant, who constitutes the majority of the audiences. So far as prosperity and the public welfare are concerned, the state is no less interested in the industrial and political education of adults than it is in the scholastic education of children. I believe that it is quite possible to

add millions to the annual output and to remake the policies of a state by a well-planned course of extension lectures that would really reach the people.

The great difficulty with the extension work that has thus far been done by the state universities is that there has been no apparent plan or policy behind it except the giving of information and the increasing of the influence of the university. It has been a mere scattering of information. Such work may be worth while, but it can never be highly effective. Behind any kind of extension lecture work should be some plan of results to be secured. It should be built on the real needs of the state and the country and should attempt to supply the information and inspiration that is needed in order that the country may be more largely prosperous and happy. It is somewhat perilous to undertake to make up such a program of lectures, but in most country sections the following topics should be dealt with among others :

Rural Coöperative Associations Here and Abroad

Business Methods of the Farm

Making Farm Life Attractive

The Selection of Seed

The Testing of Milk and of Cattle

Spraying and the Raising of Fruit

The Raising of Corn, etc.

The Hygiene of the Home

The Care of Infants

Saving Steps and Motions in the House

The Garden for the Table

A Musical Program

Several Popular Lectures

Such a program would have something in it for everybody, and it would be a definite contribution to the problems of country life. To carry it through would require a considerable expenditure of money, but not a prohibitive amount. For the

most part it would be merely a more effective organization of existing agencies. From the first this would demand state aid and some state direction. There are five different agencies that should combine in producing the program: the state university, the state agricultural college, the state board of health, the normal schools and private colleges, and the different national and state organizations that are promoting various phases of the public welfare. If only a few centers were organized, such a program could be produced practically without cost, as all of these people are already on salary for this purpose. The writer recently promoted such a course of lectures for a small Michigan town. It has been organized with little effort, the lectures and recitals have been well attended, and there has been almost no expense except a few small bills for traveling. If this should become general, it would mean that the university, the agricultural college, and the state board of health would have to enlarge their staffs of extension lecturers, and that the men in the normal schools and colleges would probably receive a small extra salary or fee from the state, according to the number of such extension engagements that they filled.

Probably the best organization of this work would be to turn over the extension lectures of all of these departments to a consolidated extension department for the state, which might be under the direction of a special state official chosen for the purpose. Or a special extension department might be built up by the state, with lecturers of its own. In most states no one of the existing agencies in the field has at its command all the talent that is needed for lecture courses in a rural community, though the agricultural college probably comes the nearest to it.

As such a department does not exist at present, the most feasible thing to do is for the State Superintendent of Public

Instruction to make up lists of speakers and subjects that are available for educational use in the state and send them around to the school authorities with a model program for the season. Such a list might well include the lecturers who may be had free from the state departments and also available lecturers, with their subjects, whose fees would come within the reach of rural communities. The public lecture is a feature of social-center work nearly everywhere, so this will be no innovation.

FARMERS' INSTITUTES

The social-center organization might well arrange to hold at the center, at some time during the winter, a farmers' institute, or perhaps better a joint meeting of the teachers and farmers in a special institute which has come to be known as the Hesperia Movement, from the little Michigan town of Hesperia, where these meetings were first held.

SUMMER CHAUTAUQUAS

The Chautauqua movement is one of the most hopeful educational movements that has come to this or any country. It is essentially a social center spread out over a considerable period of time. It is weak on the civic side, but it has the lectures and extension classes, the entertainments and social opportunities, much the same as those found in the regular social center. These Chautauquas have become general for nearly every town of two thousand inhabitants over the Middle West. They have a message that the country cannot afford to lose. Every rural person needs at least as much of intellectual stimulation, information, and social opportunity as the annual Chautauqua gives.

On the whole the best Chautauqua for a rural community that I have ever attended was the one in which I recently

participated at Valley City, North Dakota. Perhaps I cannot do better than to describe this Chautauqua.

Valley City is the county seat of Barnes County. This county is fortunate in having as its county superintendent Miss Minnie Nielson, who is at the same time the president of the State Federation of Woman's Clubs and one of the most able county superintendents in the country. School fairs were held at various places during the year, and one



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girl was selected from each rural school to attend the school of dairying and domestic economy which was held at the summer Chautauqua. This gave a group of about one hundred fifty girls. They had class work in dairying, cooking, and bird and nature study until half past two each afternoon. After that they played games or attended the sessions of the Chautauqua as they felt disposed. The Chautauqua lasted for seventeen days; the girls paid four dollars for tents, bedding, and food. I believe nearly every girl carried back with her something that would help to make her life more interesting.

There was also a similar encampment for the boys under the Better-Farming Association of North Dakota, of which Mr. Thomas Cooper is the able executive. Many of the lessons were conducted by the agricultural secretary for the county, Mr. Mylan. These lessons seemed to me singularly practical and valuable. After the lessons were over, there was a swimming lesson and then a ball game. The boys attended the Chautauqua in the evening. There was also an encampment of the Boy Scouts on the grounds.

The Chautauqua has of course the regular series of lectures and entertainments, such as are found at other Chautauquas, and for next year, the Northern Pacific and Soo railroads promise to combine in starting a demonstration farm adjoining the Chautauqua grounds. This will permit of various demonstrations to the farmers who are present and will increase the practical effectiveness of the farmers' institute which it is proposed to hold in connection with the Chautauqua.

This Chautauqua employs its secretary, Alex Karr, by the year, and has just started an extension department for the establishing of social centers and reading circles throughout the county. A Chautauqua such as this has tremendous possibilities in the improving of rural conditions.

As I attend Chautauquas it seems to me that on the whole they are somewhat too much given to the lecture that is merely entertaining ; that they are not well enough suited to the definite problems of the community in which they are placed ; that there is not as much conference and discussion among the people themselves as there should be ; and that there is great need of developing the active recreational side of the life. A Chautauqua that would do this might well introduce into the country also the games that are suited to it and create much of the spirit of play that the year is apt to lack ;

but, as it is, it is bearing a message of cheer to thousands of homes and is giving to the farmer and his wife, his son and daughter, much to think of at the plow or the dishwashing. It is sowing thousands of seed thoughts which will ripen during the year into character and wisdom.

THE CIVIC DEBATE

The old-time debates at rural schoolhouses were largely of abstract themes, or at least of distant ones, such as the tariff, capital punishment, and the like. The problems discussed were not the problems of the people who discussed them. Their elucidation had no direct effect on any one. The conclusions reached resulted in no action. These debates were carried on by a community not as well educated as are most farming communities at the present time. Still they were successful in eliciting much interest, in training some of our best public speakers, and in making a valuable social occasion for the neighborhood. We know better how to organize debates at present, and it would seem that it ought to be possible to revive the old-time debates and to make them real instruments for the public welfare.

It should be taken for granted in the beginning that the problems which should be discussed are the current problems in the life of the people, and that these discussions should not lead so much to a decision as to who won the debate as to a decision as to what is to be done. Such a debate is sure to elicit the interest of the community and to give the best possible training in public speaking. It would be impossible to make up a list of subjects that would fit every community, but the following will be problems in nearly all :

Resolved that we should combine and order our farm implements together.

Resolved that the schools of this township should be consolidated.

Resolved that we work for the consolidation of all the rural churches of this township.

Resolved that the center purchase a moving-picture machine.

Resolved that we should vote on an appropriation for graveling or macadamizing the roads.

Resolved that the boys and girls and the hired men shall be given a half holiday on Saturday.

Resolved that this township shall employ a visiting nurse.

Resolved that apple growing should be as profitable in Michigan as in Washington.

So far as these debates involve public action, committees should be appointed to secure the action desired.

It is believed that such a series of debates would be an education of the public to current needs, that they would start many people to reading on rural problems who had not heretofore taken the trouble, and that they would soon produce a community well informed in the matters essential to its welfare.

THE LIBRARY

If there is any place where people are accustomed to go, this is the place for the library, because it is mostly inertia that keeps us from reading. To go to a library building, look up a title on a card index, send in the card, and wait for the book to appear is too much trouble for most people; but if they come where they see the books, a natural curiosity leads them to look at some of them, and looking often leads to liking. At the time I was a resident at the University Settlement in New York our little library at the Settlement had a larger circulation, for the number of books that we had, than any other library in the city. It was merely because the young people came there anyway, saw the books, and were tempted to read. The libraries in the field houses of the Chicago playgrounds are usually crowded. The township library should be at the consolidated school or the social center if there is

one, on account of both the children and the adults. A library is nearly as necessary to an elementary school as it is to a college. It is impossible to study geography or history or literature, so as to get much out of them, without a good deal of reading outside the text, and the school that has failed to establish in the child the love for and the habit of reading has done only a small part of its work. The school only starts the child on the road to learning, and he must continue this by his private reading after his school days are over. If during his school days he has not formed the habit of reading books, the chances are that his later reading will be largely limited to the daily paper.

The library is more necessary to the country than it is to the city. The city man can see most of the things of the world and hear most of the distinguished men, if he chooses, at first hand. The country man does not have this opportunity. The city man has the theater and the club and the streets to divert his attention. The country man has few diversions. The city man is about equally busy all the year round, but the country man has a slack season in winter, when there is plenty of time to read. Most country sections in the North now have some sort of library, but I believe they are but little used. I know a township where there is a library of about twelve hundred books, which are purchased by township officials from money collected from fines. It is kept in a bakery in the lower part of the town, and about thirty or forty books are circulated a week. These books consist mostly of a cheap grade of novels. The circulation is almost entirely of books of this class. The explanation, I think, consists in two things:—in the first place, the books are not conveniently placed; and, in the second place, they are not well selected. It would appear that most of them were chosen for romantic girls of about sixteen, to judge from the titles. I have never

seen books on the new agriculture or rural life. Surely such books as Butterfield's "Rural Progress," Bailey's "Country Life Movement," Carver's "Principles of Rural Economics," Haggard's "Rural Denmark," and Plunket's "Rural Life Movement in the United States" ought to be in every rural library, and of course the Report of the Commission on Country Life. Then there ought to be a good practical agricultural library dealing with the problems of the particular section. There ought to be a similar library for the women on the care of the home and the rearing of children. It is doubtless true that there would be no great demand for these books at first, but the work of the school, with its agriculture and domestic science, should stimulate the interest among the young people, and they would interest their seniors.

I would not have anything that I have said taken as a disparagement of good novels. Novel reading is one of the most universal forms of recreation. It transports one instantly from the dull and the monotonous to the strange, the romantic, the dangerous; while in our own little sphere of action it enables us to live the lives of the great and the distinguished, to ride in our carriage or yacht or automobile, to converse with kings and princes, and to understand the hopes and fears, loves and hates, of those in every sphere of life. It is a way of gaining experience vicariously, of enlarging the sympathy, of coming to understand others by living their lives. It is one of the chief means of social education. It is needless to say that the farmer needs this enlargement of his social experience more than others. He needs the novel both for this and as a relief from long hours of monotonous labor, and to throw off old points of view and worries and get new points of view and new sympathies. In connection with the rural schools in many sections, they are beginning to make pretty adequate provision for the exchange of books from

school to school, so that fifteen hundred volumes are made to furnish fairly satisfactory reading facilities to a township.

It is probably best to have the books furnished in some way by the state, as this will insure a better selection, a cheaper price, and a more efficient way of dealing with books that are in need of repair. If the township library can be at the consolidated school or the social center, the children can use it constantly in connection with their school work, and they can draw out books for their parents also at any time they may desire. When the parents come to the social center, they will see the books and be led to take some of them themselves. I believe that such a location for the library would secure the selection of better books in the first place, and that it would at least quadruple its use in most localities.

The educational activities thus far described should take at least one night a week for everybody, and much more than this for those who take any of the evening courses in agriculture or domestic science. These educational parts of the program will also be the expensive features. They should be supported from school funds. The advantages that would come to the country are a sufficient reason for them.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOCIAL CENTER, THE CURE OF RURAL ISOLATION

The primary ideas that lie behind the social center are social and civic, and it is for this reason that it is so much needed in the country. All of the educational purposes that have been mentioned will have their social side as well. They offer opportunities for the country people to get together and to talk in connection with all exhibitions, lectures, classes, institutes, and the library. It is well that these social occasions should be definitely planned for and that the department of domestic economy should serve tea and sandwiches as often as possible, in order to create social occasions. The social center is the natural cure of the isolation of the country and its lack of recreation. The majority of the work of the world is social. The lawyer, the doctor, the preacher, the merchant, and most tradesmen are working constantly with others. The farmer, on the other hand, is working in the open fields and by himself. He may see only his own family from one end of the week to the other. With the coming of the rural delivery he no longer needs to go to town even for his mail. He raises most of the things he needs for the table. He has an abundance of time to think, but little opportunity to talk, except with members of his own family. Doubtless he has become accustomed to these conditions, but they are uncongenial to the boys and to the hired man. We are naturally social animals. Children cry when left by themselves, and only so far as we become engrossed in the work we are doing, or in our thoughts, can any of us overcome the sense of loneliness

from being by ourselves. The nature of the farmer's work cannot be changed, but it is possible to provide in the evening the society that the day has lacked. European peasants live in villages and go out to their farms each morning. This has been suggested as the cure of the isolation here, but the farmhouses are built in the country, and it does not seem likely that the American farmer will ever pick up his house and move into the town. Instead of this, as soon as he is able he often gives up his farm and moves to the village to live. The isolation of the country is usually considered to be its greatest drawback and the cause of the most of this cityward trend. As it makes the country less attractive, it causes property to decrease in value ; as it tends to drive away the most capable and leave the less capable behind, it causes farmers to lose caste and standing. The social center is the natural solution. As the people cannot get together at their work, they should get together in their play. The social center is the more necessary in the country than in the city in proportion as the life of the farm is more solitary.

FARMERS MUST PLAY IN THE WINTER TIME

City people take their vacations and do most of their playing in the summer time. We have very many summer resorts, but comparatively few winter resorts. The city man usually has a half holiday in summer, but seldom in the winter. In the country these conditions are reversed. The summer is the busy season, when the daylight hours are long and most of the urgent work has to be done ; but over the entire northern part of the country the farmer has little to do in the colder months except to care for his stock. It is this less crowded period that must be largely utilized for recreation, education, and sociability. The farmer probably has as much leisure as other men, but it is very unequally distributed over

the year. Since he must do the major part of his playing in the winter, it seems to follow that he must do it largely indoors, and the social center is the natural solution.

COUNTRY MORALITY

There seems to be a general feeling that moral conditions are bad in the city and good in the country, but I question if this is so. The city has its great criminals and philanthropists; it furnishes the rich soil in which all things grow rank. The country does not produce the great saints or the great sinners. It has no prostitution, but there are probably quite as many loose young people in the country as in the city. The hired man who goes to town to "have a good time" is apt to get drunk and visit the worst type of houses. Immoral tales and obscene language are a large part of the conversation of hired men and country boys. The sex instinct is very insistent in the teens, and there is gathered about it the romance of love. Country youth are not usually chaperoned, and there are abundant opportunities for seclusion. Add to this the fact that there often is little else to think of, and you have a condition out of which immorality will always grow. There is scarcely a social occasion which is not beset with temptations, the dances are generally held in the woods or at hotels, and walks and drives are solitary. The country must give a proper organization to its social life if it is only for the sake of the boys and girls.

WHAT KINDS OF RECREATION

If there is a well-equipped consolidated school, every sort of recreation that is found at a city social center may well be started there. If there is a gymnasium, there may be gymnastics and folk dancing; there may be matched games in volley ball and basket ball, and even bowling and shuffleboard will

not be out of place. There may very likely be prejudice against social dancing, but there is no other place where it may be quite so wholesome as at the social center, where the whole family is present. There probably will not be much prejudice against the quadrille and the Virginia reel, even if the round dances are not approved of, and these will serve to make the people better acquainted.

SINGING

There is a good deal of feeling in certain quarters that the old-time singing school should be revived in the open country. The singing school of the olden times was a valuable social occasion ; it offered a pleasant opportunity for the young people to get together, and it did much to make the rural home socially self-supporting. Singing is one of the things that draws the home circle together and establishes the family life. It makes for sociability everywhere and helps people to get acquainted. It is reported that most of the "sparking" of olden days was done at the old-time singing school or at the spelling match. General singing is a large element in many of the city social centers.

An effort is also being made to revive the old-time "spelling down," and for much the same reasons. Obviously spelling has not the same social value as music ; nevertheless, at least one evening a month at the social center might well be given to each of these activities of the old-time social center.

The great weakness of the social as well as the industrial life of the country is the lack of organization. There is not at present any place where country people get together so that this organization can be effected. The social center makes possible the organization of every sort of recreation, such as the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, athletic clubs and tournaments, corn and canning clubs, woman's clubs,

the grange, etc. There should be some available room in the social center where each of these organizations could meet. In most cases it may be a classroom, but there should be two or three social rooms in each building which may be used as teachers' rooms, committee rooms, school-board rooms, club-rooms, or social rooms, as occasion demands.

THE MOVING PICTURE

The moving-picture man is now found in every part of the globe, making a record of whatever is rare or curious. Nearly every great event must face dozens of machines, which record with indisputable accuracy the facts, and there are also large companies of actors who are performing before the camera scenes from great dramas, from literature and history, as well as numberless plays in a lighter vein. We usually think of the moving picture in connection with the theater, but there is really no reason for this association in our minds except that at the present time it is mostly seen there. The moving picture is the power of representation or description carried to the superlative degree. It gives to all the opportunity to witness all great events and to be conversant with all countries and all occupations. Almost anything that the eye may behold by itself or through the microscope may be represented in the moving picture. It is a story where events happen rapidly, a condensation of life with the annoying delays left out. Much that we see in the moving-picture theaters is merely the dramatization of dime novels. The best that can be said for them is that they are better than the saloon or the brothel, and that they are at least as good as the stories which they represent. A dime novel is not very uplifting at best, but that is not the fault of the picture but of the story which it portrays. The moving picture can represent better than language, either spoken or printed, the raising of all fruits, vegetables, and

grains, all processes of manufacture, all customs and ways of people, all historical events, crucial events in biography and literature, all dramas which are essentially dramas of action, and nearly the whole microscopic world, which is so largely the world of science. This indicates that the moving picture is the most effective way of teaching the processes of industry, geography, history, much of literature, and much of science. It must in the near future be a part of the equipment of every school.

The old-time moving-picture machine was expensive, and the film cost from a hundred to five thousand dollars to produce. Mr. Edison has, however, recently put on the market a small moving-picture machine, the Home Kinetoscope, which costs only from sixty-five to seventy-five dollars. The film is only a little over an inch wide, with three parallel bands of pictures. It is eighty as opposed to a thousand feet in length, and costs from two dollars fifty cents to twenty dollars. These films can be exchanged for thirty cents to one dollar, according to the grade of the film. The eighty-foot film contains the same number of pictures as a thousand feet of the old film. The mechanism of the Edison Home Kinetoscope is so simple that it can be operated by a child. The film is noncombustible. As it is usually shown it makes a picture about four or five feet square. It uses either electricity or acetylene, and a cheap acetylene generator can be secured with it. However, it has more flicker than the large machine, and does not give as satisfactory results. This small machine was designed by Mr. Edison especially with the view of introducing it into private parlors and the individual classrooms of the public school, and he is reported to have men all over the world now taking the pictures for the moving-picture geography. He has another set of educators who are preparing the films on history, and we may expect

that we shall soon have a set of educational films that will cover nearly the whole curriculum of the elementary school. He says this is to be his greatest achievement, the putting the school course into moving pictures. Something over one hundred different school subjects are now on the market for this small machine, and the number is being rapidly increased. Within the last few months the kinetophone, or the talking picture machine, has been perfected and put on the market, so that it is now possible to represent sounds as well as objects. The moving picture has the great advantage over books, that it is much more interesting. There would not be many cases of children playing hooky from a moving-picture school. The impressions that it makes are very much more vivid and are consequently better remembered; and it is a great saver of time, because it abbreviates the processes by leaving out unimportant details. On the surface it would seem to be expensive, but when we consider its efficiency in what it does, I doubt if it is really so.

Morally the moving-picture theater is probably even now our best type of theater. There is much less in the films that is objectionable than there is in the plays given in the highest-priced theater on Broadway. There is a National Board of Film Censors in New York, by whom many of the films are censored. The films to which this Board objects are destroyed, and if only certain parts of the film are objectionable, these parts are cut out. Most of the larger cities have also their own board of film censors, which is usually in the police department. As a result very few of the films shown in progressive cities are objectionable. They may be inane, and often are; they may be untrue to life, which often happens; they represent a sort of dream world of romance, where the hero always wins, however foolish he may be; but there is seldom anything positively bad in the moving

pictures that are now being made in this country or that can be seen in any of the moving-picture theaters. The most objectionable features are the vaudeville interludes, which are generally of a low order as art and are sometimes suggestive. But one may see a great deal at almost any of these theaters that is well worth seeing.

Not long ago I saw at Hull House, Chicago, a picture of the life of Moses. The whole story was there in the vivid colors of the Orient, as plain to the eyes as though one had been an eyewitness of these great events.

At a theater in Worcester was a picture of the Boston Tea Party. We saw the meeting in which the plot was perfected, the men disguising themselves, and finally the tea being thrown overboard. The various uniforms which were shown were, I believe, historically accurate. Any child could see this picture for fifteen minutes and remember it for the rest of his life, whereas he might study the ordinary historical account as found in the school histories for a long time and then forget it in fifteen minutes.

Not long ago I saw in a Western city a picture representing the sleeping sickness in Africa. A German scientist is working in his laboratory, and at length succeeds in isolating the germ of the disease. He makes a culture and inoculates a rat. Before injecting the serum, he takes a drop of the rat's blood and puts it under the microscope. The red corpuscles of the blood can be seen moving about with the greatest freedom. They are so numerous that they make the picture dark. The next day he takes another drop of the rat's blood and puts it under the microscope. You are the eyewitness of a great tragedy. The germs of the disease, which can be seen as plainly as good-sized fish, are swimming about in the drop of blood, and as they go they attack the red corpuscles and eat them up. The second day he puts a

second drop of blood under the microscope, and you see that the war of extermination has gone on merrily. The germs have become an army, and the red corpuscles are making their last stand. The third day the rat dies, and the microscope shows that the red corpuscles are all gone and the germs are in full possession. This picture was much more satisfying than the ordinary microscope observation, because it was the experiment that succeeded under perfect conditions. There are also excellent films representing the literature of the high school. The trouble is that at present these valuable films are as "two kernels of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff." One has to see so much inane material before a really good film appears, that it is hardly worth the time. It is estimated that more than four millions of people visit these moving-picture theaters every day. They are mostly people of the working classes, who are seeking rest after a hard day's work. The films are intended to furnish amusement to the weary, not instruction for the most part.

It is difficult for the moving-picture man to select his films if he wants to, because as a rule they are sent out on a circuit and come to each in regular order. If he wishes to select his pictures, he has to pay more for them than he does if he will take them in series. Of course such an unselected series of films, representing for the most part dime-novel adventures, is not adapted to the use of the schools, and in time there must be an exchange intended for the schools alone.

The first step for such a series has already been taken by Mr. Edison. We must have a moving-picture geography made by an expert geographer, a moving-picture history planned by a historian, selected events from the lives of great men to give a vivid knowledge of the man and to inspire emulation, and yet other pictures which will represent many of the great dramas and much of the best literature. All the different

trades and occupations should be represented, both for the sake of the general knowledge and that young people may choose their life work with intelligence.

The moving picture has wonderful effectiveness in teaching moral lessons, because of the keen sympathy that it creates. It is easy to see that the whole audience is often indignant at deeds of cruelty, and the picture performers are sometimes hissed as they would be in real life. The keenest sympathy with suffering is shown. Mr. Fairchild in his courses for moral education uses the moving picture constantly. A short time ago I took a boy of three to a moving-picture show. One of the scenes shown was of a bully who was unkind to a dog. The dog is hungry and the man will not give him anything to eat, and kicks him when he comes near. He finally catches the dog, ties a stick of dynamite to his tail, and lights the fuse. The dog, however, does not perform according to expectations, but runs in among the men. They run and the dog runs after them. They enter a shed followed by the dog. The men run out, but the dog seizes the bully and holds him; the men lock the door, the bully pulls the stick of dynamite off the dog's tail, the dog crawls under the door, and the shed blows up. The next day I was out walking in the woods with this small boy, and he said, "If we should meet a dog anywhere, we would give him something to eat, would n't we?" and again in a moment, "Then he would like us, would n't he?" I do not think any amount of talk about kindness to animals would have made the same impression. The church ought to have its own exchange for all the Bible stories, and most social lessons can be taught more effectively through moving pictures than in any other way. If we are to have moral education in our schools, or if we would introduce more kindliness into daily life, the picture machine is a powerful ally.

As every city and state will need a series of films, the practical thing would seem to be for the city or state to make a contract with the companies for a series of films representing the approved subjects of the curriculum, and then to send these films around from school to school within the city. This would require every school to have one moving-picture machine at least, and perhaps one for each classroom if the smaller machine proves to be the practical one. For the social center the large machine will be better, except for the one-room school, and with the moving picture the social center will be a success from the first. The same pictures may be used in the school and the center. This will also keep the parents in touch with the school work, as there will be no difficulty in getting them to follow a geography or history lesson in moving pictures.

Moving-picture machines have been installed already in the social centers in a number of cities, and in some of the high schools. Almost any film company has a considerable number of films that are suitable for use in a public school or a social center. Three films, approximately a fifty-minute program, need not cost more than three or four dollars, so that the expense is not at all prohibitive. A catalogue of the subjects offered can be secured by writing to any film company. Wherever the moving picture can be installed, it will solve the question of attendance and will make the place a real center.

THE SOCIAL CENTER IN THE SUMMER TIME

Picnicking seems to be the one form of rural recreation that is common among farmers at present, and the common picnic grove is the natural summer edition of the social center. The sort of picnic that is needed is a township picnic for every Saturday afternoon from the first of May to the end of September. This should take place at the township park

or the consolidated school if there is one. This will give the opportunity for the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls to practice. It will permit of the organization of athletic clubs and the holding of tournaments in tennis, baseball, basket ball, and volley ball.

The monthly program. The activities that have been outlined for the social center have been educational, recreational, and civic. Perhaps they may seem to be too numerous. The program suggested would appear as follows :

THE MONTHLY PROGRAM

First Friday of each month : singing school

Second Friday : spelling match

Third Friday : debate

Fourth Friday : school exhibition and fair

Every Wednesday night : a public lecture

Thursday nights : classes in domestic economy and agriculture followed by lunch and dancing

Saturday night : moving pictures

The young people would meet in the gymnasium or the classrooms for their clubs or exercises at the same time their seniors were having their meeting.

For the summer time there should be a Saturday-afternoon picnic each week and drills of the Boy Scouts, meetings of the Camp Fire Girls, and athletic tournaments and contests.

It may appear that the social center is taking the people away from home too much, but it must be remembered that the same person will not as a rule attend each evening, and also that, as the whole family attend together a number of these occasions, it does not disrupt the home, even if they are frequently away. Such a center would organize public opinion into a strong restraining force, and would keep the boys and girls away from questionable resorts by giving them a more attractive place to go.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SOCIAL CENTER FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF COUNTRY LIFE

PRESENT LACK OF ORGANIZATION

The farmers are more poorly organized than any other class, and probably they get a smaller proportion of the just returns from their industry. The isolation of the farms has made communication difficult and the farmer a self-sufficient individualist. This sturdy independence is a real social and moral safeguard to the nation, but it also has made coöperation difficult, and the farmers as a class ineffective in proportion to their numbers. To overcome the effects of this isolation is perhaps the greatest problem of the country at present.

This condition has not always prevailed. The pioneers may have been scattered over a large area, but they were drawn closely together in spirit. There were no carpenters in the early community, and together they erected the cabin of the newcomer. There were no reapers or mowers, and neighbor followed neighbor in the swath. There were no nurses, and each of the neighbors watched in turn with the one that was sick. It was essential to safety oftentimes that they stand together to repel the attacks of the Indians. Out of this condition grew a feeling of neighborliness, a sense of solidarity that has been largely displaced by the coming in of the different trades and the development of labor-saving machinery. The results of these developments have been good for industry but bad for the social life.

It cannot be expected that such a condition will create a community sense or that such a community will work for clean politics, good roads, good schools, good churches, or other common purposes. The community cannot well do this, because there is no real community. It has no organization or general meeting through which it can work. Thus the community loses the improvements, and the people lose the social life, the moral safeguards from an active public opinion, and the social education from working for the public welfare. Our cities are rapidly developing a sense of solidarity or mutual dependence to-day. It is becoming a part of the public consciousness that the welfare of all is dependent on the welfare of each, and there is a growing sense of responsibility for the conditions under which the weaker members of the community are living. But the farmer has very little class consciousness, and he cannot well have such a consciousness unless he meets with others of his class more. The social center is essential to the organization of country life.

THE GRANGE

I was told at Rocky Ford, Colorado, last winter that if they could get seventy-five cents for a crate of cantaloupes, they were well satisfied. Seventy-five cents for sixty is one cent and a quarter apiece. When I have paid twenty-five or thirty cents for one of these at the hotel or in the dining car, it has seemed to me that there had been a good deal of loss between the cup and the lip, that apparently the cost of production did not have much to do with the cost to the consumer, and that in general the farmer was not getting his share. Farmers can have what they want if they will work for it as a class, but the trouble thus far has been that they have not known what they wanted, and they have had very insufficient leadership from people who understood the problems

of the farm. If the new facilities that are needed for the elevation of farm life are to be secured, they must come through the farmers themselves, and this can only be done by their working together. The grange seems to be the only organization at present that is prepared to attack the problems of both the business and the social welfare of the farming community. It is in itself a social and recreational agency of no small importance in the country. I quote from Butterfield's "Chapters in Rural Progress":

The methods of work of the grange are many and varied. In addition to the regular literary and social programmes previously mentioned, socials are held at the homes of members, entertainments of various kinds occur at the grange hall, and in many ways the association becomes the center of the intellectual and social interest of the community. It is a debating society, club, lecture course, parliamentary society, theater, and circulating library. In fact it lends itself to almost any function that will instruct, benefit, entertain, or assist its members financially, morally, intellectually or socially. Of course not every grange is awake to its opportunities; but as a rule, where a live one exists, it is the acknowledged leader in social movements.

The grange has within itself the possibility of doing nearly all for the rural community that the social center may do. It is largely the question of inclination, except that it does not seem likely that the grange may ever receive public funds. The farmers, however, are poorly organized, and the membership in the grange is relatively very limited. The numbers are increasing, but Butterfield finds in the five states where the grange is best organized — New York, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania — that the total membership in 1905 is only 222,000. The rural population of these five states is probably not less than six millions, and as men and women and children over fourteen may be members of the grange, this would probably indicate that

about five or six per cent of the population of the rural communities who are eligible to membership are actually members of the grange. It is often difficult to become a member. A friend of mine, a highly respected member of the community, had his name before the grange for six months before it was acted upon favorably, and my name was similarly before the grange for more than two months before action was taken. Such tactics prevent the grange from filling the real need of the country. It must become more democratic and invite all to become members without undue delay or red tape, or else let the membership be an inner circle but invite all to take part in its general activities. As compared with the labor unions the grange seems to be much more exclusive and membership more difficult. Every community needs what we might term a League for Rural Progress, — some sort of organization such as exists for New England and for several individual states, — that will concern itself with every phase of the public welfare. This the social-center association might do. This the grange or the rural church might also accomplish. The one that actually does it will probably become the dominant factor in rural life. If the grange takes in all and seeks to serve all, it will become the social center. If, on the other hand, the social-center association conceives its functions more largely and really reaches the community, it may on its civic side do the work that the grange has been seeking to do and make the grange unnecessary, or the grange may hold its meetings at the social-center hall and become a coöperating agency.

THE SOCIAL CENTER AND ECONOMIC COÖPERATION

The country-life experts seem to be pretty well agreed that the greatest weakness of the country at present is the lack of organization among farmers and their failure to

coöperate in common enterprises. Only a small percentage of the farmers are members of any farmers' organization. Although they are the largest single class in the country, they have little influence on legislation or national politics. They do not combine, and they consequently sell their produce for whatever they can get and buy whatever they need at any price that they may be charged. Coöperative associations have greatly improved these conditions abroad. In Denmark they have managed largely to eliminate the profits of the middleman, and to sell their produce directly to the consumer and purchase directly of the manufacturer. Coöperative credit societies have often been able to borrow, for three or four per cent, as much money as was needed. These facts are well known. But the American farmer is too much of an individualist to combine with others. He is leading too isolated a life. The rural social center may well serve as the basis on which to build up such a system of coöperation. It will overcome the suspicion and make the farmers better acquainted. It furnishes the opportunity for talking up and launching the movement.

The social center would appear from this study to be crucial to the larger education of the farmer and his wife, to breaking the isolation of the farm and providing it with the needed recreation and social life, and to the organization of the farm community for various coöperative business and civic enterprises. All of these things are just now fundamental to the welfare of the country, and all the organizations that are interested in promoting the welfare of the country may well combine in promoting the social center.

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